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The Nation.

December 20, 1986 $1.25; U.K. 85p

EDITORIAL

RON TAKES TO THE FIFTH

On the eve of her appearance before the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1951, actress Gale Sondergaard, famous for her portrayal of Spider Woman, asked the Screen Actors Guild to support witnesses who availed themselves of the constitutional privilege against self-incrimination. She received a letter replying, "This is not the time for dialectic fencing." The man who wrote that, Ronald Reagan, did not stop there. As a key member of a public relations scam called the Motion Picture Industry Council, he called on those subpoenaed to "tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth." The council deplored those who "hid behind" the Fifth Amendment.

In Congressional hearings last week Lieut. Col. Oliver North relied on his privilege against self-incrimination, and it would be comforting to believe that Ronald Reagan, who apparently still considers North a "national hero," has had his consciousness raised about constitutional rights. However, we suspect the reverse: that the same Reagan who helped enforce the Hollywood blacklist in the 1950s and then, in 1980, told *Los Angeles Times* reporter Robert Scheer, "There was no such thing as a blacklist in Hollywood," is back in the selective memory business.

There is one difference and one similarity between taking the Fifth then and now. The difference: the hearings of the 1950s were wrecking expeditions whose purpose was to punish people for their political beliefs and activities; today's hearings are an exercise of Congress's proper function as watchdog over the executive. The similarity: in both cases witnesses invoked the Fifth to protect others as well as themselves. Thus, an Administration whose highest law-enforcement officer has called the A.C.L.U. a "criminals' lobby," is now the beneficiary of the amendment its chief executive once abhorred.

'THAT RAG IN BEIRUT'
Stanley Reed

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Daniel Singer

EASY LISTENING
Robert Corn

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Jesse Lemisch

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LOOKING AT THE CONSTITUTION

COULD MEESE BE RIGHT THIS TIME?

SANFORD LEVINSON

In one of his fireside chats, Franklin Roosevelt said of the Constitution, "Like the Bible, it ought to be read again and again." Roosevelt's speech belongs to a long tradition of American political rhetoric that equates the Constitution with more conventional objects of worship. Such comparisons help us understand recurrent debates about the most fundamental aspects of the Constitution.

The rich history of disagreement in organized Christianity also sheds light on this discussion. The fundamental schism that we call the Reformation raised two profound questions: Where is God's message to be found? Who offers the last word, or at least the currently authoritative understanding, concerning what that message is? For Catholics the answer to the first query is a mixture of Scripture and the traditions of the church; for Protestants it is Scripture alone. Catholics answer the second question by pointing to the organized church, with the Pope as the ultimate symbol of infallibility in doctrinal pronouncements. Protestants, on the other hand, emphasize the priesthood of all believers; no single institutional authority can give binding interpretations.

The same questions, and the same basic answers, confront those who take the Constitution seriously. What constitutes the U.S. Constitution? Roosevelt implied that it is a specific document which, like the Bible, can be removed from a shelf and studied. One might, however, define the Constitution as only beginning with the parchment ratified in 1788 and its subsequent amendments. In addition one might include not

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LETTERS.

IN WIESEL'S DEFENSE

New York City

If *The Nation* wants to maintain its 120-year tradition and reputation for veracity, it should verify all of Alexander Cockburn's quotes, particularly when he writes about Jews and Israel. In his mean-spirited style, he attacks Nobel Peace Prize–winner Elie Wiesel ["Beat the Devil," Nov. 8], by quoting from an interview in the second volume of Wiesel's *Against Silence*. Cockburn writes: "Wiesel says that, as a Diaspora Jew, the 'price I chose to pay for not living in Israel . . . is not to criticize Israel from outside its borders.'" I thank Cockburn for not citing the page reference because it gave me the opportunity to read my favorite author while searching for the alleged quote. The full quote appears on page 213 and, with the portions deleted by Cockburn in italics, reads as follows:

> Indeed, there is something new in this questioning on the part of the Jews. But I have a principle. I am not Israeli, I am a Diaspora Jew, and the price I pay, the price I chose to pay for not living in Israel, *especially in times of danger*, is not to criticize Israel from outside its borders. *When I have something to say, I go there and say it. Sometimes I am received with anger, but I do it nevertheless. That is my taboo, and I stop on that line.*

Cockburn likewise omits part of Wiesel's statement as to why he pulled out of the 1982 genocide conference in Israel after Turkey protested the inclusion on the agenda of the Armenian genocide. Turkey had secretly threatened reprisals against Jews in Turkey if the Armenian genocide was on the agenda. Thanks to Helsinki Watch, Arthur Miller, *The Nation* and others, we know Turkey's threat was not idle. Wiesel explained his withdrawal from the conference by saying that it was unthinkable to hold a conference on genocide if the result of that conference was that even one Jew would be killed.

Wiesel's record on genocide is well known. For example, in a 1978 interview (*Against* Silence, Volume III, page 107), there was this exchange:

> WIESEL: I remember I fought for Biafra, as I did for Bangladesh, as I am trying to do now for Cambodia. I think it is a scandal. That the United States government has not done anything to stop the massacre in Cambodia is something I cannot understand. And the UN of course has other things to do than think of Cambodia.
>
> CROMIE: What happened to the tribe in Paraguay?
>
> WIESEL: There is a tribe in Paraguay which is being exterminated. Nobody cares. And I am convinced that Mengele, who is in Paraguay, is helping the government.

The Holocaust Memorial Museum, soon to be built in Washington by the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, of which Wiesel is chair, will, as publicly stated, include the Armenian genocide.

Did Cockburn search for quotations by Wiesel in an effort to discredit him, and when he couldn't find them, simply alter them? Did Cockburn deliberately ignore the following quotation, which appeared on the same page from which he misquoted?:

> I am a pacifist, I do not believe in wars, I do not like weapons. Warcraft does not impress me—I know how to write about people not about tanks.

If Cockburn was looking for a Wiesel quotation relevant to Wiesel's being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, it was staring at him.

Wiesel needs no defense from charges by Cockburn. The only reason for this letter is to safeguard *The Nation* from Cockburn's falsehoods. *The Nation* interests me. I care for its reputation. *Bernard D. Fischman*

COCKBURN REPLIES

Detroit

There were no misrepresentations, no falsehoods, and if Bernard D. Fischman had cared to call *The Nation*'s research department, he would have discovered that I had supplied it with all the materials from which I had quoted. Fischman triumphantly italicizes the material omitted in my ellipses, but to what end? I trimmed to abbreviate, not to distort. "Especially in times of danger": the discussion here was about Israel and its 1982 invasion of Lebanon. Was Israel then in danger? If there was misrepresentation in omitting that phrase, it certainly did not favor Wiesel. As regards the second ellipsis, I was careful to cite the occasion on which Wiesel says that he went to Israel and raised private criticisms there.

My source regarding Wiesel's withdrawal from the 1982 conference on genocide was a story by Miri Paz in *Davar* for October 17, 1986, in which there was no mention of the rationale Fischman ascribes to Wiesel. Paz quoted Wiesel as justifying his withdrawal on the ground that as a Jew he could not act against the government of Israel. But does Fischman really want to argue that the best way to respond to racist threats is to be blackmailed into silence? Does he subscribe to Wiesel's shameful silence in 1982 on the topic of the invasion?

Fischman concludes with a quote. Let me give it in full, with the portion he omitted in italics:

> I am a pacifist, I do not believe in wars, I do not like weapons. Warcraft does not impress me—I know how to write about people, not about tanks. *But who am I to judge the soldiers? I can only pass judgment from a historical point of view, and from that perspective I believe one cannot judge an ancient people on the basis of episodes. We are a 4,000-year-old people, and what we do today reflects a history of 4,000 years. Episodes are episodes.*

A little later in this same interview Wiesel says:

> But the most surprising, and painful at the same time, is that the greatest and most visible conquest of Israel is in the military realm. Naturally, I would prefer Israel to be a nation of poets and writers, where everyone dreams mystical dreams, but that is not possible. During the past 2,000 years this people did not have even the remotest possibility of obtaining experience in military matters. Today Israel manufactures its own tanks, airplanes; its war campaigns are studied in every military academy of the world.

So here the designated recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize refuses to make a judgment on the barbarous invasion and the Sabra and Shatila massacres, conducted just three months before he uttered those sentiments, and, with a *pro forma* expression of regret, seems proud of the militarism that disfigures Israeli society.

In another interview, two months later with *The Jewish Post and Opinion*, Wiesel exhibited his servility to power in answering an inquiry about his views of the Begin government's policies on the West Bank: "You must be in a position of power to possess all the information. Once you are in power you use the information. I don't have that information, so I don't know really. I know that it cannot go on like this." I think Wiesel's role in public life is mostly to shut people up: to stop thinking or asking any questions that might discommode the powers that be. In every sense of the word, he is one of the exploiters. If that seems harsh, Fischman and others might study some of the coverage of Wiesel's Peace Prize in the Israeli press. They might be shocked by the freedom of commentary, impossible under the censorship operating here. For example, in *Hadashot* for October 17 the literary critic (and concentration camp survivor) Gabriel Moked concluded:

> It is hard to say that, besides making general statements about a struggle against the forces of evil and the peculiarity of the Jewish message to the world, Wiesel has attained any new understanding of the psychological, political, religious and existential aspects of the Holocaust. Actually, he only commercializes the theme for a

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EDITORIALS.

The Plot Thickens

As the plot thickens in Washington, the fight intensifies for the right to describe its limits and define the issues. The crisis managers are set against the crusaders, the pragmatic establishment against the moral military. The radical opposition, at this point, is hardly heard. That may change as the connections between the malefactors in the several scandals come so close to the surface that even the media will be obliged to join the final dots. But for now the principal debate is between those who think the system has survived a bad bungle and those who never thought it bungled in the first place.

Patrick Buchanan, the party ideologue of Reaganism and its most perfervid promoter, is leading the fight for the right. "Make no mistake," Buchanan shouted to some 3,000 Cuban-Americans rallying for Reagan in Miami last week, the "furor in Washington . . . is not about whether some technical laws were broken but whether we would stop communism in Central America." The blame, he continued, lies with Congress, which "witlessly cut off aid to the freedom fighters in Central America." Everyone knows, Buchanan said, that actions taken to prevent "communistic expansion" are privileged, and not subject to legal prohibition. "God bless Colonel North," Buchanan said, to rhythmic chants of "Rea-gan, Rea-gan, Rea-gan" from the crowd, described by a reporter for *The Miami Herald* as "frenzied."

On the same day, Buchanan popped up on the Op-Ed page of *The Washington Post* with a hilarious defense of

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Lieut. Col. Oliver North, comparing him to patriots and radicals who ran slaves along the Underground Railroad and ran guns to Jews in British-occupied Palestine.

"Ollie North is an American hero," Buchanan wrote, who "was buying time for his own distracted and indifferent countrymen," and holding "'the fort alone, till those who are half blind are half ready.'"

The White House officially chided Buchanan, but it must be at least half pleased that someone is cheerleading for its side. The strikes from the establishment positions—the State Department and *The New York Times*, to cite two identical examples—have been damaging. The great newspaper gave to *The New Republic*'s literary editor, Leon Wieseltier, the task of making its first major statement on the Iran-*contra* affair. In one of the best-written pieces of extended double-talk the Sunday magazine has run in years, Wieseltier decided that the Reagan Administration has come to grief because of its "exercises in exaggerated humanitarianism" in trying to free the hostages in Lebanon, and its obsessive compassion for Nicholas Daniloff. Those unfortunate aberrations should not detract from the urgent business of supporting the *contras* in their war against Nicaragua and fending off hostile forces generally. Just call things by their rightful names, Wieseltier advised. Let's admit that the Afghani mujahedeen are not fighting for democracy, that the remnants of Pol Pot's butcher brigade are not Sunday school students. Reagan's problem is that he is too "idealistic." If U.S. foreign policy "is to recover from the moral and intellectual intoxications of the Reagan years, it must be recalled to realism," the article concluded.

The debate between the "idealists" and the "realists" has been going on for years. It was the framework for all discussions of foreign policy in the 1950s, before Vietnam and the rise of a radical critique of interventionism. If the debate this time follows its historic course, the "realists" should win, and the heated rhetoric spewing from the Buchanan shop will be replaced by more measured language from Senator Sam Nunn's office, or wherever.

But the realities of America's imperial project will not likely be discarded along with the florid language. Both sides agree on the essential elements of policy, which is based on the demands of an endless cold war and the need for strategic hegemony in America's ever-widening spheres of influence. Walter Isaacson, a *Time* senior editor and coauthor of a book about the "Wise Men" who created cold war policy, has suggested that Reagan assemble a similar brain trust to get him out of the current mess. Fortunately, most of the original Wise Men are dead or retired, but replacements taken from the foreign policy establishment would only repackage the same postwar system. Nowhere in the Wise Man blueprint is there a method for avoiding its contradictions: the striving for political and economic independence in outposts of empire, the demands for redistribution of wealth and power from the poorest pawns and clients of America, the inability of domestic industry to develop rationally in the face of an inequitable international division of labor and consumption.

Crusaders like Buchanan offer an easy escape from the failures of "realism" to the crowds that cheer them on. The first radio reports from the Dade County Auditorium where the rally was held evoked the static-scarred sounds of Europe fifty years ago. There is a certain consistency to images of the right, and the left, down through the decades. Nicaragua looks a little like Spain. Oliver North seems to step out of a Leni Riefenstahl movie, by way of Norman Rockwell. Even the center—vital, hot or flaccid—says the same things over and over again. Surely it's time for a new wave of analysis and the action it can produce.

'Beirut Rag'

"What is driving me up the wall," Ronald Reagan told *Time* on November 26, "is that this wasn't a failure until the press got a tip from that rag in Beirut." Although several reports of U.S. arms shipments to Iran cropped up over the past year, Reagan is correct in crediting *Al Shiraa*, a weekly magazine published in Moslem West Beirut, with breaking the story. *Al Shiraa*'s unique contribution was to present the scoop in a context that provoked the Iranians into confirming that former national security adviser Robert McFarlane had visited Teheran.

Al Shiraa is not so obscure in Beirut as in the West. The circulation of 25,000 claimed by its editor and publisher, Hassan Sabra, makes it a medium-size publication by Lebanese standards. In an interview with the Associated Press, Sabra, a 38-year-old Shiite Moslem from southern Lebanon, denied receiving subsidies from any Arab government. Beirut sources, however, claim that the magazine was first financed by Lybians. Recently *Al Shiraa* has shown a keen interest in the affairs of the Lebanese Shiite community, and it tends to reflect the political perspective of Syria and the Amal movement. The magazine caught the attention of Western specialists on Lebanon last March, when it published an extensive analysis of the Iranian-backed Hezbollah (Party God), which is challenging Amal for leadership of the Lebanese Shiites.

Sabra insists that his information on the U.S.-Iran relationship came not from Syria, as charged by Washington and the Western press, but from representatives of Ayatollah Hussein Ali Montazeri, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's designated successor. The text of the celebrated article, published November 1, supports his claim. It is mainly concerned with the power struggle in Iran between pragmatists such as Hojatolislam Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, speaker of the Iranian Parliament, and radicals associated with Montazeri, who has long been the leading advocate of backing Islamic revolutionaries abroad. Sabra does not reveal the news that has caused such a commotion until near the end of the piece, when he cites McFarlane's visit to Teheran as evidence for the radicals' contention that the Iranian regime has deviated from the revolutionary path.

According to *Al Shiraa*, the leak came in retaliation for the Iranian authorities' arrest of Mehdi Hashemi, an official

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under Montazeri's wing, after he became too disruptive of the government's efforts to rally international support for its war with Iraq. In the fall Hashemi reportedly ordered the abduction of the chargé d'affaires of Syria, Iran's only ally in the war, and a year earlier had placed weapons in a plane carrying Iranian pilgrims to Saudi Arabia. On December 10, Iran announced he had confessed to defying Khomeini, hoarding weapons, murder and other crimes. Hashemi, whose brother is Montazeri's son-in-law, until recently ran the World Islamic Liberation Movement, which channels funds to Lebanese Shiite groups and other revolutionaries abroad. Montazeri has acted as a spiritual guide to the organization. So it is quite plausible that after Hashemi's arrest, Montazeri's supporters disclosed the McFarlane visit to Sabra in order to discredit Rafsanjani and his allies. STANLEY REED

Stanley Reed is a writer who specializes on the Middle East.

May in December

It's not May in December. The ten days that shook the Chirac government are not a repetition of the great rising of students and workers that precipitated the fall of Gen. Charles de Gaulle. The difference can be put simply. In 1968 students wanted to smash the university in order to change society; they were looking to the workers as allies and were openly political. This time the students wanted to get on with their studies, and they insisted, particularly at the beginning, on the nonpolitical nature of their movement.

It all depends on your definition of the political. The movement of French youth for the preservation of an egalitarian school system breaks with what everyone assumed to be the new pattern of French political life. After the Socialist government had proved itself to be ideologically bankrupt, the model was expected to be American, with Reagan, Rambo and all. "The era of Jean-Paul Sartre is over," the left weekly *Nouvel Observateur* declared recently, "that of Bernard Tapie has begun"—Tapie, a self-made tycoon, being a sort of French Lee Iacocca. The students were thus seen to be self-centered go-getters, keen on careers and incapable of collective action. They surprised Paris and the world by suddenly rising en masse to refuse an American future.

The proposed legislative reform was only the thin edge of the wedge. The idea behind it was to break the French system of universities equal in principle and to start moving toward the American system. The new law would have allowed universities to become more selective in their admissions process, to raise fees, and to issue their own diplomas rather than national certificates, making some diplomas more prestigious than others. The students vetoed those three main proposals. Each high-school graduate, they insisted, must be able to enter any university. Tuition fees and diplomas must be the same in universities all over France.

The moral nature of this spontaneous democratic movement goes a long way to explain the clumsy blunders of clever politicians. After the students announced that they would hold a demonstration, René Monory, the Minister of Higher Education, stated that the fate of the law would depend largely on their performance. They thereupon staged, on Thursday, December 4, the biggest youth demonstration France had ever seen. They were about half a million just in the streets of Paris—joyful, exuberant, triumphantly convinced that the bill was now ground forever under their numbers. But that night the response of the government was a *Non*, echoed by tear gas grenades. The next day, sensing that the sympathy of the population was with the students, Monory promised to remove the three most contested provisions from the bill. That might have been enough to convince party politicians to bargain, but at this stage the students dismissed the very idea of compromise as if it were an indecent proposal. That night the ruthlessness of motorized police cowboys—who beat Malik Oussékine, a 22-year-old student, to death—put an end to any hesitation the students might still have had.

Strangely enough, it was Prime Minister Jacques Chirac and his closest associates who were remembering 1968. Reviving the old Gaullist methods for turning public opinion against the students, they encouraged the police to allow hooligans to loot stores and burn cars at the end of peaceful student demonstrations. The collusion between the police and the troublemakers was flagrant; French television, for instance, showed helmeted fascist thugs crossing a police cordon with the inspector's approval. Faced with such tactics student leaders were driven to follow the example of their predecessors and to ask labor unions to join them in the fight.

Thus, on Sunday everything seemed set for a confrontation. By Monday afternoon it was all over. Squeezed between the unyielding students and President François Mitterrand, capable of intervening at any moment in the name of national unity, and with his own side badly split, Chirac decided to withdraw the legislation. Had he done so four days earlier he would have spared one life and scores of wounded. But confronted with a genuine movement, politicians always hit hard first and surrender after.

All this does not enhance the presidential prospects of Jacques Chirac and is bound to increase the strains and stresses on his coalition. Yet such political calculations are historically unimportant when set against the awakening of France's youth—of this new generation which began its apprenticeship in the antiracist struggle of the past few years and wore the badge "Hands off my pal." Admittedly, the youngsters still have some illusions. There can be no equal universities in an unequal society. France has its own elite colleges, the Grandes Écoles, and a strong educational bias in favor of the upper classes. The students still have a lot to learn. But the government has just given them an accelerated, if bitter, course in political education. With the weather on the side of the students, perhaps it was spring in December after all. DANIEL SINGER

Daniel Singer is The Nation*'s correspondent in Europe.*

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

Important Message

The following is a statement issued by the Association of Professional Pundits on December 7. It was prepared by an ad hoc committee whose members include James Reston, Flora Lewis, David Broder, William Pfaff, Meg Greenfield, Walter Isaacson, Jack Rosenthal, Richard Reeves, David Ignatius and Walter Lippman. The A.P.P. suggests that the statement be run with emphases added, and I am happy to adopt this recommendation:

> With his *frank admission* of error in his radio address of December 6 the President has *done much to dispel* the *divisive scandal* that threatened his Administration. It is now *time to call a halt* to the inquiries, which have been taking on the *repugnant guise of a witch hunt*. Let the *healing process* begin. This nation *can ill afford* the trauma of another Watergate or *two years of drift*. Already our European allies are expressing *astonishment and dismay* at the bloodletting in Washington.
>
> As journalists we feel *no joy* in the unfolding of the Iran arms saga. The uniqueness of our democracy lies not only in the separation of powers but in our unity of purpose. By reaching out to such *experienced statesmen* as Frank Carlucci, Mr. Reagan has shown the decisiveness that has been one of his most admirable features. With the appointment of a *bipartisan council of wise men and women*, he could emerge from his present difficulties with his political credit not diminished but increased.
>
> Mr. Reagan's goals, foolishly executed by *overzealous* subordinates, were *not in themselves at fault*: A *search for opportunity* in a post-Khomeini Iran, *resolve* in curbing the *expansionism of the Sandinista dictatorship*. Such policies need not lurk in the shadows of illegality. They can *step forward* in the *high noon* of public approval. In the past six years the President has *done much to renew America*. There is still time for his final years to serve as a *fitting climax*, not to trickle away in an ignominy that would only give comfort to the enemies of democracy.

Nervous North

Lieut. Col. Oliver North's quivering emotion on taking the Fifth was solemnly acknowledged by many on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and some Democrats were ready to join with Reagan in honoring a man who has spent the past few years arming men whose favored pursuit is the raping of women and the disembowling of infants. North was the recipient of an ecstatic pen-portrait by Shirley Christian in *The New York Times* on November 30, and a scarcely less enthusiastic profile by Charles Mohr in the same paper on December 4.

An associate of North's in the Marine Corps paints a less flattering picture of the man, as a rank opportunist with overweening ambition, propelled to the National Security Council by his "daddy-rabbit," or patron, Lieut. Gen. Ed Bronars, now retired. This associate also wondered how North could have got high-security clearances given what he tactfully implied to be a disposition of extreme nervousness and excitability. North, incidentally, hired a lawyer last summer. Even if the press was not paying much attention, the arms smugglers knew they were breaking the law.

Creepy Carlucci

"His fans? Just about everybody," Dan Rather told the viewers of *The CBS Evening News* the day Frank Carlucci 3d was appointed to succeed Vice Adm. John Poindexter as director of the National Security Council. And, indeed, the general impression given by the press was that in Carlucci could be found the rich tilth of statesmanship, integrity, regard for due process and the rule of law essential to "restore confidence" (a crucial pundit buzz phrase, indicating usual fear that masses will catch on, rise up, throw rascals out).

In fact Carlucci is admirably suited to carry on without a hiccup from where Poindexter and North left off. His curriculum vitae is as good as a course in postwar imperial history. He joined the Foreign Service in 1956, and after a spell as economic officer in the U.S. Embassy in Johannesburg, he served as political officer of the U.S. Embassy in Léopoldville, the Congo, at a crucial moment in that country's fortunes. Patrice Lumumba had led the Congo to independence and was publicly expressing views disturbingly at odds with the interests of the United States, a stance which led, by natural degrees, to his murder on January 17, 1961. After the assassins were done with Lumumba, a C.I.A. officer trundled the body about for a few hours in the trunk of his car while he figured out what to do with it.

In 1964, ever on the move, Carlucci was to be found holding the post of Consul General in Zanzibar, and shortly thereafter he was expelled for plotting the overthrow of Abeid Karume, the country's leader. His old love for the Congo surfaced once more when, the following year, he assisted in the eviction of Joseph Kasavubu from the presidency and the installation of the then-Maj. Gen. Joseph Mobutu, a stalwart of the United States and Israel and one of the greatest robbers in African history. When Mobutu visited the White House on December 9 of this year he was no doubt pleased and touched to find Carlucci welcoming him at the door.

Carlucci next headed to Brazil, in the wake of the military coup of 1964 in which then-Col. Vernon Walters, eternal ax-man and currently U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, had played an important advisory role. Carlucci stayed in Rio until 1969 as political counselor, oiling the thumbscrews through five dark years of Brazilian history. Between 1969 and 1975 he was back in Washington, at the Office of Economic Opportunity, where he played a devious role in Governor Ronald Reagan's onslaught on California legal services; then at the Office of Management and Budget, forging a close relationship with Caspar Weinberger; and then at the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

In 1975 Carlucci was rushed to Portugal, taking over as Ambassador and entrusted by Secretary of State Kissinger with the task of "saving" Portugal from the radical tides then swelling strongly. Standard liberal bios assert that Carlucci

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

resisted Kissinger's orders to implement a coup on the Greek model and instead recommended the traditional C.I.A./social democrat buy-out plan, sturdily reliable in many a postwar NATO crisis. This may be so, but directly after the abortive right-wing coup of March 1975, the deputy chief of the Portuguese military said, "I don't know what will be the attitude of our government, but it would without a doubt be preferable for Mr. Carlucci to leave Portugal for his physical security. The way things now stand, it is possible he might experience certain regrettable incidents."

Carlucci finally returned to become Deputy Director of Central Intelligence under Stansfield Turner. Along with Carter, Brzezinski and Turner, he helped hatch a mad scheme to destabilize South Yemen. Apart from that he performed routinely in the endless war against truth and freedom, down to such mundane duties as lobbying Congress successfully to exempt the C.I.A. from important provisions of the F.O.I.A., and fostering the Intelligence Identities Protection Act. In 1981 he joined his old boss Weinberger as number two in the Pentagon, and struck up a close relationship with Maj. Gen. Richard Secord, then Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Middle East and subsequently one of the arms dealers forming part of Reagan's shadow government. From there Carlucci went to Sears World Trade. In its issue of June 25, 1984, *Fortune* remarked that international traders had been speculating that the company was a front for U.S. intelligence activities abroad.

So we may reasonably say that Carlucci is the right man for the job.

Footnote: The Winter 1986 issue (Number 27) of *Covert-Action Information Bulletin* reviews Carlucci's career. Box 50272, Washington DC, 20004, (202) 747-5317.

Murky Muskie

History will probably not give much space to the deliberations of the investigative commission of wise men appointed by President Reagan to look into the procedures of the N.S.C. Wisdom in this case assumed the form of John Tower, Edmund Muskie and Brent Scowcroft. Tower, formerly a Texas Senator and latterly a U.S. arms negotiator, brings with him the undoubted asset of having once had Robert McFarlane on his Senatorial staff and having as a brother-in-law Sam Cummings, head of Interarms, the largest private arms dealing firm in the world. Muskie may have caught the White House's attention on account of his role in winching the good name of Nestlé out of the mud. Back in 1982, Nestlé was cowering in the storm of bad publicity surrounding its marketing of infant formula to Third World mothers. A boycott was under way. Nestlé's P.R. strategist, Ray Pagan, dreamed up the notion of a "task force" to examine the company's conduct, pull no punches, bar no holds, drop chips where it may. Muskie was hired and thus was born the Infant Formula Audit Commission. From Nestlé's point of view everything worked out fine. The Muskie commission took the heat off Nestlé and duly made a number of recommendations that conspicuously omitted any discussion of Nestlé's marketing techniques in pushing infant formula to Third World mothers. For this strategy Nestlé received a Silver Anvil Award this year from the Public Relations Society of America.

Jumping Judy

Connoisseurs of the tempestuous career of my old friend Judy Miller will be interested to see how she fares in Washington. Judy has been recalled from Paris to become news editor in the Washington bureau of *The New York Times*. (John Vinocur, previously *The Times*'s metropolitan editor, has been made executive editor of *The International Herald Tribune*, which spells doom for that excellent paper.) Judy caused some stir earlier this year by disclosing that when five female journalists had been interviewing Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi, he had invited three of them—separately—into a tiny bedroom and made "an abrupt sexual advance." At the time she wrote this Miller had been banned from entering Libya. The ban was not, it turned out, the consequence of fearless political coverage. When some of Judy's colleagues visited the appropriate Libyan official to ask him to lift the ban, he said sourly, "Miss Miller is a very rude lady." It turned out she had addressed the front-desk man at the press hotel as "you fucking bastard," and when told of the ban at the Tripoli airport, she had hit an immigration official with a telephone.

History's Threads Entwine

To defend itself in the matter of Renata Adler's articles, against the libel suit entered by Greg Rushford, former Congressional investigator, *The New Yorker* has retained Len Garment. During Watergate, Garment worked on Richard Nixon's legal team. He will now be defending Adler's articles, which were well nourished by the working notes of David Dorsen, assistant counsel for General Westmoreland and earlier assisting counsel on the staff of John Doar, special counsel to the House Judiciary Committee during Watergate.

Now Crook the Pregnant Hinges of the Knee

The Osric Dining Society is meeting in Washington to select the most sycophantic journalist of the year. Last year's winner, Morton Kondracke, has since slid into oblivion and has to keep his knee in good crooking condition by practicing in front of the mirror. Smart money favors perennial suckerfish Hugh Sidey (3-1) though I prefer to see young blood honored, such as David Ignatius, but 6-1 the field.

Addendum

Due to early Thanksgiving deadlines, I was unable to correct the dates between which the Congressional ban on military aid to the *contras* was in force. From October 1984 to June 1985 there was a complete prohibition on U.S. funds to the *contras*; until last September military supplies could not be furnished without Congressional authorization, which was not granted until October.

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ARTICLES.

TAPPING NEW TECHNOLOGIES

New Law Offers Easy Listening

ROBERT CORN

It's 1984 again in Washington, thanks to the Electronic Communications Privacy Act of 1986, signed by President Reagan on October 21. The act revises Title III of the 1968 Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act, better known as the Federal wiretap law. For two years civil liberties and industry groups as well as journalists urged Congress to update the law because it failed to account for new communications technologies, particularly those relying on radio or computer transmissions. The new law applies to computer and other electronic communications, cellular telephone calls and stored data.

The original version of the act would have effectively protected new communications technologies while leaving existing safeguards intact. The Justice Department, however, demanded changes in the legislation that have made the law a wish list for the law-enforcement community. In September, as the bill neared passage, Senator Patrick Leahy stated, "At the request of the Justice Department, we strengthened the current wiretap law from a law-enforcement perspective."

The wiretap law did not need to be strengthened. The procedures for obtaining court approval to install a wiretap have never seriously inhibited the police's ability to secure that approval. In 1984 judges authorized more Federal wiretaps than ever before—three times the number approved in 1981. That same year Federal and state police together submitted 802 requests for electronic surveillance—the highest number since 1973. Judges approved all but one.

New technologies have not impeded the grim trend. Where there is any doubt about the government's authority to listen in, courts generally err in favor of the boys in blue. If the law does not keep up with technology, the go-ahead is given anyway. In 1984 a U.S. Court of Appeals authorized the placement of secret video cameras and microphones inside a house even though it acknowledged that the law made no provisions for such snooping. The Supreme Courts of Kansas and Rhode Island decided that cordless telephones are not protected under Federal law because the radio transmissions between the handset and the base unit can be easily intercepted. In the Rhode Island case the court held that it was no invasion of privacy for cops to camp out a few hundred feet from a suspect's home for several weeks and, without having a warrant to wiretap, record every telephone call.

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A survey conducted by the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment (O.T.A.) found that as new technologies proliferate, so does government surveillance. The office's report, released last fall, concluded that Federal agencies already are using a wide variety of techniques: scanning radio transmissions, monitoring computer use and electronic mail, intercepting cellular telephone calls and listening to satellite, microwave and fiber optic transmissions. Approximately 25 percent of the Federal agencies responding to the O.T.A. survey reported some use of electronic surveillance. The fifteen agencies reporting the most extensive use indicated that they planned to expand their inventory of electronic eavesdropping technologies by about 40 percent. Those fifteen did not include the Central Intelligence Agency and National Security Agency.

The report stated that many technologies "have outstripped constitutional and statutory protections, leaving areas in which there is currently no legal protection against, or controls on the use of, new surveillance devices." It described the need for Federal policies to balance protections for civil liberties against the demands of law enforcement, and it warned that the cumulative effect of widespread police surveillance "could change the climate and fabric of society in fundamental ways."

Although the new act was originally proposed to curb increasing surveillance, in many cases the Justice Department's changes reduced the law's privacy protections. The earlier law prohibited unauthorized interception of the contents of communications, defined as any information concerning the identity of the parties involved in an exchange, or the "existence, substance, purport or meaning" of the communication. The new act deletes from the definition of "contents" the existence of the communication or the identity of the parties. So no authorization will be necessary for surveillance that discovers only that a call took place and the names of those involved.

This small but significant change will greatly enhance the government's ability to conduct certain types of surveillance. The Reagan Administration recently assigned a Federal Bureau of Investigation squad to trace the route by which government information has been leaked to the press. Its task will be far easier now that Federal agents can identify the parties to telephone conversations without having to satisfy a judge that the surveillance is necessary for national security. It would not be difficult in 1987 for the government to identify, and silence, a Deep Throat.

The changes in the law's definition could lead to specialized surveillance of the networking patterns of citizens. Computer programs that analyze telephone traffic information can be applied to the communications of a political group, a student community or a ghetto to illuminate invisible social networks and identify key members. Although the government must apply for a wiretap order to have access to the substance of a telephone conversation, it can amass a great deal of information without actually hearing the conversation.

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Supporters of the act argue that it protects telephone dialing information because police must obtain a court order to authorize the installation of pen registers, devices that record the numbers dialed. But the law directs the courts to authorize the installation of pen register if the police can show that "the information likely to be obtained by such installation and use is relevant to an ongoing criminal investigation." It is, therefore, hard to imagine that any application could be rejected under this standard.

Even if the law restricted the use of pen registers as an investigative tool, it would not necessarily limit police access to the information the registers provide. The legal definition of a pen register does not apply to "any device used by a provider of wire communication service for billing, or recording as an incident to billing, for communications services," so cops who can persuade telephone companies to give them billing records have no need for court orders. There are still other ways to get the desired information. In March 1985, *The Washington Post* reported the government's plan to monitor by computer all telephone calls originating from Federal offices. The purpose of the plan was to identify calling patterns and to spot frequently dialed numbers that would reveal employees' calls on personal business or to dial-a-porn, for example. It would be no long leap for the computer analysis to pick out calls to reporters as well.

Other provisions of the new law further reinforce the government's ability to obtain telephone records. One section requires any telephone company or electronic communication service provider to hand over subscriber information or toll billing records upon request of the F.B.I., without judicial review. The Bureau must simply certify to the company that the information sought is relevant to an investigation of a foreign counterintelligence operation and that it believes the person under surveillance is an agent of a foreign power. The only limitation is a requirement that the F.B.I. inform the relevant Congressional committees every six months of all "requests" for records made under this section. Given the long time lag, the word "oversight" is meaningless in such cases.

The philosophy behind the 1968 law was that wiretapping is an extreme measure with serious implications for civil liberties. Congress specified a list of crimes for which wiretaps could be authorized when it adopted the original act. Even then, individuals concerned about privacy, such as Senator Philip Hart, felt Congress had allowed too much surveillance.

The original list of Federal crimes for which tapping or bugging could be authorized was briefly supplemented on two previous occasions, but the current act increases the list by about one-third. Now wiretaps may be used in investigations of mail fraud, prison escape and automobile theft. The law also expands the category of Justice Department officials who may authorize applications for court approval, to include "any acting Assistant Attorney General or any Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the Criminal Division."

The F.B.I. persuaded Congress to allow it to hire independent contractors to intercept communications. The House Judiciary Committee's report on its hearings explained that this change is "designed to free field agents from the relatively routine activity of monitoring interceptions so that they can engage in other law enforcement activities." No one who testified on the legislation and no one on the committee found it remarkable that wiretapping has become so commonplace that the Bureau lacks sufficient personnel to carry it out.

These gaps in protection might have been more understandable if, as a trade-off, the legal recognition of privacy rights had been fully extended to new communications technologies. But the standards for protecting electronic communications are vague, difficult to apply and riddled with exceptions. The law specifically denies protection for many of the technologies—cordless telephones, noncellular mobile phones and certain types of pagers—left unprotected by recent judicial decisions. The law also excludes protection for any electronic transmission that is "readily accessible to the general public."

All the limitations on the procedural safeguards for traditional communications technologies also apply to electronic technologies. But instead of making a bloated list of Federal crimes for which electronic communications interceptions might be authorized, Congress decided to allow the interception of any electronic message that "may provide or has provided evidence of any Federal felony." The same lax standard applies to the "protections" for stored data. After messages have been in electronic storage for 180 days or more, the police may secure a warrant to seize them without notice if they show that the data would be "relevant to a legitimate law enforcement inquiry."

Thus has Congress managed to water down the privacy protections of existing communications technologies while establishing second-class status for future technologies. □

DRAWINGS BY MARGUERITA BORNSTEIN

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PRESIDENT PURSUES NEUTRALITY

Costa Rica: Back From the Brink?

RICHARD J. WALTON

When *contra* leaders gathered in San José, Costa Rica, in late November to discuss a program for their post-Sandinista government (a wild delusion), not all of their top men were in attendance. Arturo Cruz and Alfonso Robelo, leaders of the United Nicaraguan Opposition, showed up for the talks, but Adolfo Calero, head of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force, and Enrique Bermúdez, the *contras'* military chief, were conspicuous by their absence. Costa Rica's President, Oscar Arias Sánchez, who considers both men military rather than political figures, had denied them visas.

A year ago, when I visited San José in the final months of the administration of Luís Alberto Monge Alvarez, the country's prized policy of neutrality was visibly under stress [see Walton, "How the U.S. Is Changing Costa Rica," *The Nation*, October 5, 1985]. Monge's statements about the Sandinista government next door were increasingly bellicose; Green Berets were training the police of a nation that prides itself on not having had an army for forty years; and Costa Rican security forces were more or less openly aiding *contra* troops in the north, whose presence the Monge government continued to deny.

Arias, the nominee of Monge's ruling National Liberation Party, took office in May as the peace candidate. His defeated opponent in the February elections was the hawkish Rafael Angel Calderón Fournier, darling of right-wing U.S. fund-raisers, and a welcome guest at the Reagan White House.

Some things under Arias are not much changed. Costa Rica's foreign debt stands at between $4.5 billion and $6 billion; only Israel has a higher per capita debt burden. The country is still in desperate need of economic aid. Newspapers, radio and television have, if anything, stepped up their relentless drumbeat against Nicaragua. (Only the English-language weekly, *The Tico Times*, provides balanced, fair coverage.) And Arias's criticism of the Sandinistas is even harsher than Monge's.

Yet although Arias's anti-Sandinista rhetoric is tough enough to warm the hearts of the most fervid Reaganites, which may be its intent, his accompanying promises of neutrality are unequivocal. Even more significant, in the early months of his administration, Arias has put his words into action. When Nicaraguan troops destroyed some buildings just inside Costa Rica's border in early summer, Arias's Minister of Security, Hernán Garrón, investigated and reported that the Sandinistas had been provoked by *contra* attacks. That would have been unthinkable under Monge, who used border clashes to accuse Nicaragua of acts of war. In July the Arias government deported two *contras*, and Garrón stated outright that *contra* forces were operating from Costa Rica. Later that month, in an act that astonished the nation, Arias fired two high-ranking immigration officials, Juan Sánchez Solano and Guillermo Solís Espinoza, for permitting a clandestine *contra* hospital to operate. "We're going to throw them out no matter who they are if we catch them helping the *contras*," Arias said in August.

The demonstrations of neutrality continued into September. On September 3, Civil Guards occupied a secret airstrip near the Nicaraguan border that had been used for *contra* supply flights. The field was about five miles from the Murcielago base, where Green Berets had trained 1,500 of Costa Rica's 6,000 Civil Guards. The Green Berets are now out of Costa Rica. On September 24, Arias told the U.N. General Assembly that he would not allow the country to be used for military purposes. "We do not believe in this type of solution," he declared, "and we have made this known to our best friends and allies in the international field." Four days later, as if to drive the point home, a San José court handed down five-year prison terms to eight Nicaraguans, a Costa Rican, a Frenchman and a Briton for committing "acts hostile to Nicaragua."

There is widespread agreement that Arias is sincere in his professions of neutrality. However, there are equally widespread doubts about whether he can pull it off. Monge was engaged in a delicate tightrope act. He wanted his attacks on the Sandinistas to be harsh enough to keep U.S. money coming but not so harsh as to provoke a clash with Nicaragua. In 1985 about $200 million came directly from the Reagan Administration, with almost as much again from international lending agencies and private banks whose loans are subject to U.S. approval. The total infusion—about $1 million a day—contrasted sharply with the $16 million Costa Rica received from the Carter Administration in 1980.

When Reagan took office, Costa Rica was on the verge of economic collapse, its coffee and bananas competing in a saturated market while the price of oil and other vital imports soared. Inflation rocketed, thousands were out of work, interest on foreign debts could not be paid.

Catastrophe seemed imminent until the Reagan Administration, seeking a second front against Nicaragua, discovered Costa Rica. Money began to pour in, the Monge government became more hostile to Nicaragua and *contra* activity in the country increased. Toward the end of his administration, Monge was plainly beginning to lose his precarious neutralist balance; it seemed he would soon fall entirely into the U.S. camp.

Monge was spared that disgrace by the elections, however, and he bequeathed the dilemma to his successor. Arias, a man of intelligence and enormous pride, is convinced that it would be fatal for Costa Rica to be sucked

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into the Central American maelstrom. Plainly he has tried to eliminate an effective *contra* presence before part of the Reagan Administration's $100 million in aid to the rebels begins to flow into his country, where many people—both inside the government and out—are genuinely sympathetic to the *contras* and/or are susceptible to bribery.

If Monge was walking a tightrope, Arias seems to be attempting what one observer called a game of international chicken, trying to convince the Reagan Administration that the survival of a liberal democracy in Central America is in the interest of the United States, even if the Monge government refuses to be pressed into joining the anti-Sandinista crusade.

The U.S. response so far has been ambivalent. The Administration has somewhat reduced its economic assistance to Costa Rica over the past year, from $196.5 million to $151.1 million, but it remains to be seen whether that trend will continue. Certainly the United States has never been reluctant to exert economic pressure, and the Costa Rican economy is as vulnerable as ever. Arias has resumed making interest payments on the country's foreign debt, which Monge had suspended, and those payments alone exceed $250 million this year, more than Costa Rica can expect to receive in new loans and grants.

A year ago Eduardo Lizano Fait, head of the Central Bank, and Francisco Gutiérrez, program director of a private think tank called Economic and Financial Counselors, told me that the new government would have only a couple of years to set its economic house in order before social unrest began. They may have been overly optimistic, for unrest has already started. September and October brought a wave of demonstrations, as labor unions protested that salary increases, averaging 4 percent, have fallen far behind the annual inflation rate, expected to reach 16 percent this year. All sectors of the economy were involved, from banana-plantation and dock workers to transport and service industry personnel to a broad range of state-sector employees, with schoolteachers particularly militant. In response the government has called for a "great national pact" to agree on wage restraints, though it can have few hopes that this will come about.

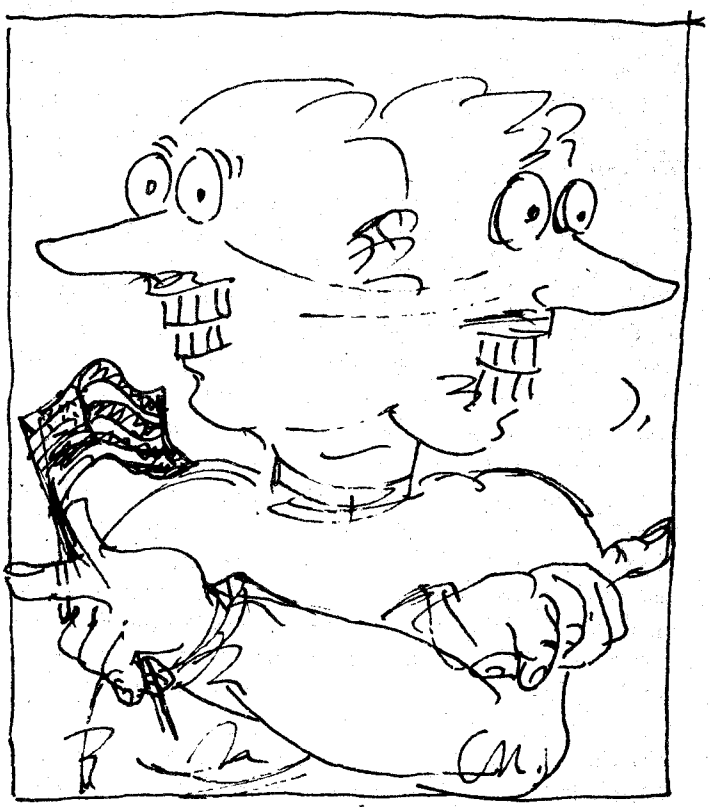
Both Lizano and Gutiérrez agree that the recent drop in oil prices and the temporary rise in coffee prices, which was caused by adverse weather in Brazil, the world's largest coffee producer, did not have as significant an effect as expected. Both say the nation must improve its export earnings and reduce its interest payments, but neither man is confident that Costa Rica will have any more success than other countries in a similar predicament have had. And reducing interest payments—assuming the creditors permit it—means an escalating debt, no matter how ingeniously the rearrangement is made.

Lizano is singularly candid for a presidential appointee, urging Arias to bite the bullet early in his presidency. He argues, as does the International Monetary Fund, that as a necessary first step toward restructuring the economy, the government must attack inefficiency in agricultural production. In July, Arias removed a $30 million subsidy for basic grain production and imposed price ceilings. But the difficulties inherent in that approach were soon apparent. On September 17 police in San José used tear gas—a most uncommon occurrence in pacific Costa Rica—to disperse a thousand farmers demonstrating against the abolition of price supports.

The demonstrators made it plain that they would not surrender price supports easily, even though rice, beans, corn and other crops can be purchased much more cheaply on the world market. Lizano complained in September that plans for agricultural producers to switch to livestock and other crops will probably "sit on a shelf somewhere and collect dust." On October 3 Arias bowed to the farmers' demands and reinstated the subsidy.

A more severe, some say irresistible, pressure is being exerted by the U.S. Agency for International Development. For much of this year, A.I.D. withheld an estimated $40 million of the $151.1 million in U.S. aid until Costa Rica agreed in principle to sell off most of its industrial and commercial enterprises to the private sector. This is in line with A.I.D.'s ideological drive to impose Reagan-style development models on the region. In Costa Rica it has sponsored a five-year plan to attract foreign investment and edge the economy toward a range of nontraditional exports.

No one denies that Costa Rican state enterprises need reform, whether they remain public or go private. Many are incompetent, corrupt and grossly overstaffed. Yet the system of patronage from which those defects stem lies close to the heart of Costa Rican politics, and any serious attempt at reform would be politically dangerous. Beyond that, there are also important segments of the ruling National Liberation Party that support the public ownership of key industries. Arias is known to share that conviction, at least to



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some degree, and is reportedly considering selling some enterprises to the workers if A.I.D. pressure persists—hardly what the Reagan Administration has in mind.

While Arias grapples with these conflicting forces, the debt grows, prices for basic foods and household goods increase, purchasing power shrinks with continuous inflation and devaluation, the middle class sees its prospects diminish and the *tugurios* ("shantytowns") mushroom. Although the government periodically removes the *tugurios* from the airport road, they spring up again in areas less visible to tourists, to the south of San José. A new one, San Miguel Higuito, grew to a population of 15,000 in just three or four months and is visibly bigger each week.

This is the context in which Oscar Arias Sánchez must play his international game of chicken against a U.S. Administration determined to destroy the government of neighboring Nicaragua. If the Reagan Administration cannot buy the cooperation, or at least the tacit acquiescence, of the Arias government, it is likely to go ahead regardless, building a southern front against the Sandinistas in the knowledge that Arias is powerless to secure his northern border and too financially dependent on the United States to resist politically in such multilateral forums as the United Nations or the Organization of American States. Few observers in San José doubt that Arias will make an honest effort to keep Costa Rica from being ground up by the Reagan Administration, but equally few would be foolhardy enough to bet on his success. □

LEMISCH REPLIES

The Politics of Left Culture

JESSE LEMISCH

The dispute in these pages about authenticity, left films and folk singers, new and old aesthetics, and the voices in which we speak to America also raises fundamental questions for the American left. Can we imagine a democratic left majority in this country? Can we begin to figure out how we might help to bring that about? In my October 18 article, "I Dreamed I Saw MTV Last Night," I spoke not just of folk culture but of left folk culture, which is a quite different political construct. Now we must speak of the politics of left folk culture. We want neither an art nor a politics that relies on authoritarianism, manipulation and falsehood. In this article I will build on the aesthetic themes of the first article and attempt to relate them to larger political ideas.

Jesse Lemisch is a professor of American colonial and social history on the faculty of the State University of New York at Buffalo. He is currently a visiting professor of history at Baruch College, City University of New York.

"Agent of change" has been a favorite game of the left. What group will lead us to revolution? This game has always been played on a tilted board, with all the pieces inevitably tumbling toward the corner marked "class analysis." But the movements emanating from blacks, students, women, gays and others could not be predicted by class analysis—suggesting that we need a more flexible approach to the game, or maybe that we should just throw the board away.

Left folk culture has its own ranking of agents of change. Essentially this culture says that an ill-defined but predominantly rural "folk" are the authentic and real Americans from whom change will come. The rest of us, morally and politically of a lesser sort, will get a little closer to the real thing if we sing the songs of the folk and, sometimes, wear their clothes and dance their dances. Left folk culture has involved a laying on of culture in which most of us are trained in the culture of some of us. To its supporters, so cocooned in a theory and politics that they fail to notice it, "folk" is an inclusive term. To others it is an exclusive one.

In last week's "Letters" column Dick Flacks adopted precisely this theory and politics. But he thoroughly misunderstands the implications of his own argument—that he is taking a specific political position, choosing preferred agents of change and justifying the laying of some people's culture on others:

> Songs . . . are repositories of personal and collective memory. . . . [They] connect the audience . . . to historical struggles. . . . Seeger has led efforts to make folk song a living component of urban popular culture. . . . The so-called folk revival of the late 1930s introduced urban audiences to authentic folk artists. . . . Those artists . . . were proof that an unschooled and uncommercialized creativity thrived at the grass roots and could create an alternative culture. . . . It would be a culture more open to popular participation.

Whose memory and whose struggles? Whose history and whose traditions? Who is singing whose songs? Flacks describes a one-way trip: rural culture is brought to urban audiences. This is terribly condescending and directly at odds with the idea of building a left majority. There is never any suggestion of a cultural exchange in which minstrels might tell the folk of the concerns of urban audiences. (Imagine the folk, gathered in a field in Kansas, coaxed into clapping and singing along for several hours in a diverse program of rap and salsa.)

I do not urge the imposition of some people's culture on others, with the attendant assumptions about the superiority of one to another. Flacks unknowingly reaffirms traditional old left priorities about agents of change. He is looking for a democratic and participatory culture, but he endorses a situation in which we sing their songs and, amazingly, he envisions that situation creating a culture open to popular participation. He calls it "grass roots." Whose grass? Whose roots? What became of the fine old S.D.S. idea—expressed in those buttons that Dick and I still wear from time to time—that people should make the decisions that affect their lives? What does this one-way notion of popular

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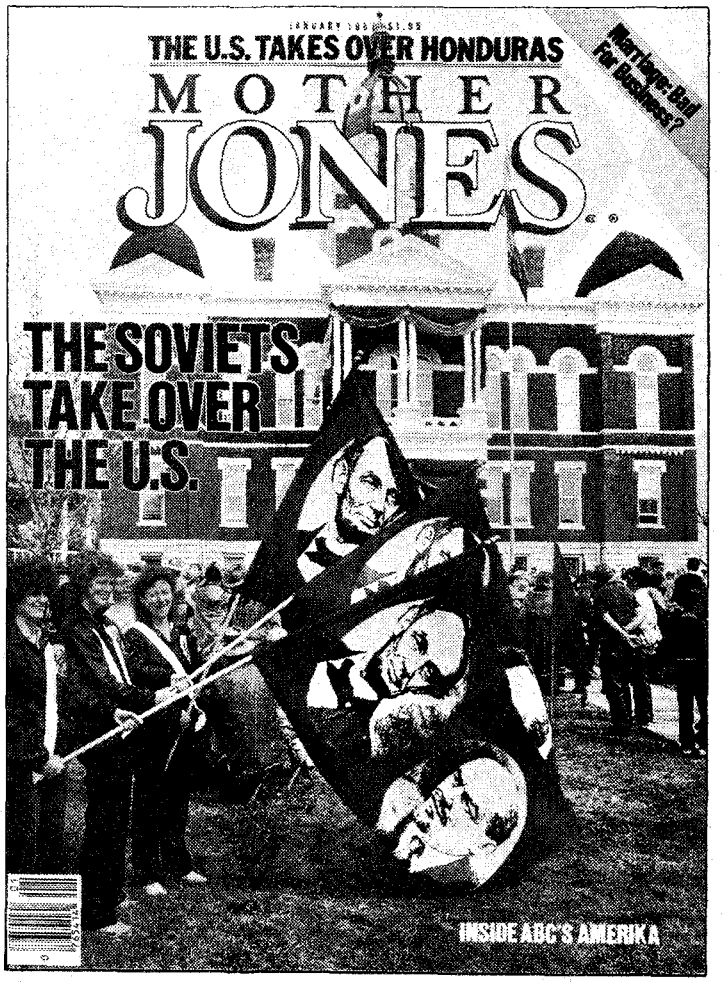

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culture based on "a minstrel bringing the news to the people through song" have to do with the goal of organizing people where they live? The underside of Flacks's theory is a prescription for paralysis on the part of the urban audience, whose members remain couch potatoes before the great screen of history, incapable of becoming authentic historical actors.

This brings us back to the question of authenticity, which I raised in my article but which my critics have not addressed. When Si Kahn sings about the concentration camps in the accent and music of Appalachia, he is inevitably subordinating the experience of one people to the expression of others. Few on the left would disagree for a moment if I objected to a song performed by blacks in a Yiddish accent, to the accompaniment of a klezmer orchestra, with lines such as:

> Massa whip me so hard, oy vey
> Massa whip me so hard, oy vey

Critics who talk abstractly of interesting experiments in adopting the voice of another culture fail to understand that more is at stake than a few "dumb" or "mawkish" songs. Left folk culture rests on a selective and deeply political process in which certain voices are adopted and others are rejected. The left will go no place in America so long as it perpetuates these moral rankings and, equally bad, fails to understand, even when presented with the most blatant examples, that it is doing so.

Many of my critics' arguments rest not on the here and now but on other cultures and other times. Seeger's work, says Flacks, has been a model for *nueva canción* ("new song") and for a worldwide cultural movement. If that is true, it is an important measure of Seeger's influence, but the point is irrelevant to the current political impact of left folk culture in the United States; so are examples from the American past. Flacks reminds us of the popularity of folk song in the early 1950s, and Maurice Isserman quotes Elinor Langer's evocative description of folk festivals in that decade. Certainly much could be said about hootenannies, which helped sustain the left in those dark days. But times change; music changes. It is an exercise in nostalgia to rest an argument about the vitality of left folk culture in 1986—in the face of the hegemony of rock and other non-folk forms—on fond memories of the "hoot."

Isserman and Flacks both argue that without Seeger, there would be no Dylan. That is like saying that because Protestantism came out of Catholicism, Protestants should love the Pope. Putting aside the fact that Woody Guthrie had a more powerful influence on Dylan, those who know the history of Dylan's emergence from Seeger's womb know that it is not as simple as Flacks and Isserman suggest. At the 1965 Newport Folk Festival, after Cousin Emmy finished "Turkey in the Straw," Dylan came on stage in "a matador-outlaw orange shirt and black leather, carrying an electric guitar." (That and the following quotations are from Robert Shelton's book, *No Direction Home: The Life and Music of Bob Dylan*.) After Dylan's "rocking electric version" of "Maggie's Farm," there were boos, a cry of "Bring back Cousin Emmy!" and later, "Play folk music! . . . sellout!"

> Backstage . . . at the first sound of the amplified instruments, . . . Seeger had turned a bright purple and begun kicking his feet and flailing his arms. (A festival official said later: "I had never seen any trace of violence in Pete, except at that moment. He was *furious* with Dylan!") Reportedly, one festival board member—probably Seeger [It was Seeger, Harold Leventhal later told the singer's biographer, David Dunaway]—was so upset that he threatened to pull out the entire electrical wiring system.

In *Sing Out!* magazine British folk singer Ewan MacColl wrote of Dylan's "tenth-rate drivel" and "the watery pap of pop music." According to Robbie Lieberman, writing in *Radical History Review*, even the Weavers' "'pop' sound" raised the ire of *Sing Out!*'s writers in 1951. Shelton thinks that Dylan's 1965 taunt, "Something is happening here/but you don't know what it is/Do you, Mr. Jones?" refers to Seeger, among others.

I guess these are the "dialectical interconnections" between folk and rock seen by Flack.

Certainly Dylan learned plenty from folk musicians, but they were not his only teachers. "Seeger should have put away his banjo and apprenticed himself to Elvis Presley," writes Isserman, ridiculing my position. But that's just what Bob Dylan did. "I played, back in 1961 and 1962, when nobody was around, all those Elvis Presley records," Dylan reminisced. He claimed to have had a "breakdown" when Elvis died, and he once said, "If it wasn't for Elvis and Hank Williams, I couldn't be doing what I do today." Without Seeger, no Dylan? Is that all there is to say?

If we on the left expect the American people to trust us, we have to tell the truth. *The Good Fight* and *Seeing Red* simply do not. We have a duty to go beyond one-sided celebration. Flacks's defense of those films is labored and disingenuous. They are, he writes,

> not primarily about the Communist Party or the Spanish Civil War. They are about the vicissitudes of political commitment, about the fate of idealism and the consequences of lives spent fighting for lost causes.

That is an invention: the films are about the Communist Party and the Spanish Civil War, are correctly perceived as such by audiences and are terribly misleading. In addition to the many good fights memorialized in the films, the "lost causes" that are not mentioned or seriously confronted include the C.P.U.S.A.'s endorsement of: the Nazi-Soviet pact, the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II, government suppression of antiwar groups and the no-strike pledge. This cover-up is more than "a bland evasion of critique and of self-awareness," as Flacks puts it. A left that makes such films and then ducks reasonable criticism of them is not worthy of trust.

Isserman, uninformed about the economics of film production, thinks that the interview format of *Seeing Red* is cheap and that the American Social History Project is relatively rich. Neither is true. *Seeing Red* cost more than

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double the budget of *1877: The Grand Army of Starvation*. Gary Lenhart's equally uninformed lecture to me founders on this same point. Had they been more innovative, the makers of *Seeing Red* could have made a better film about the C.P. with the same or a lower budget. They chose an expensive form. Isserman's idea that more money would have made *Seeing Red* better is echoed in Lenhart's more haughtily phrased argument that it all comes down to economics. (Lenhart also throws in some cute professor-baiting, another part of the complex of attitudes I've criticized.) In a way, I took the filmmakers more seriously when I described their approach as "militant amateurism." I saw a coherent aesthetic in their work, even if I disagreed with it. I have no doubt that their films would look somewhat better if they had more money, but the filmmakers do have an aesthetic, and there is no reason to think that given sufficient funds they would betray that aesthetic and switch to making what my critics call "slick" films.

One of the things that I have learned from this debate is that my critique is too limited. Both I and the letter writers have been discussing left culture in the most instrumental and didactic sense, arguing about the best modes for "political persuasion and education," in Isserman's words. Aren't we all still trapped in the stultifying old Communist notion of art as a weapon and failing to think in large ways about the connection between art and utopia?

In the 1960s, while beginning work on a "history from the bottom up" that was deemed "relevant" in the movement, I nonetheless argued against the idea of relevance as an exclusive goal for all left scholarship. At the 1968 founding meeting of the New University Conference, I presented a paper titled "Who Will Write a Left History of Art While We Are All Putting Our Balls on the Line?" It seemed to me that the demand, fashionable at the time, to produce scholarship with an immediate payoff—leaflets at the plant gate—could only stunt and distort the development of left culture. By the way, I remain friends, almost twenty years later, with the two left intellectuals I criticized in that paper. I am amazed by the failure of some of my critics to understand the role of criticism in an enduring and multi-sided left community. Seeger and Kahn have done important work in the left, but a political aesthetic invites political comment, and making one is hardly "trashing." On many fronts these days there seems to be a narrowing of permissible dissent within the left.

Political commandments suffocate art. Who will engage in the deeply radical work of reconsidering conventions in the realm of form, and struggle to bring new ones into being, if questions of form are dismissed by the left as a bourgeois scam? Who will determine how the world looks? If the left aims only at the didactic, who will chart the human soul? If we don't, others will. They may do it well—this is not solely a question of politics—or, they may reinforce stunted conservative views of human possibility.

These questions belong on the left's agenda. Attempting to build a left majority (and avoiding the horrors of Leninism) requires, among other things, an open and pluralist politics, telling the truth, becoming less bound by

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dogma about agents of change, disassembling our moral rankings, opening ourselves to our own authentic experiences and voices, and striving, sometimes in concord and sometimes in discord with our movements, to develop left scholarship and art. Without art, there is no vision; without vision, there is no left. □

Meese

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

only key decisions of the Supreme Court but also fundamental documents such as the Declaration of Independence and the Gettysburg Address, and, beyond that, aspects of the American experience that cannot be reduced to a text at all.

Once an agreement was reached on what counts as "the Constitution," there would still be debates about proper interpretation. Who resolves them? Specifically, is the judiciary—and particularly the Supreme Court—the ultimate interpreter of the Constitution? Or, as a constitutional protestant might put it, is interpretation the province of all those who profess what might be termed the constitutional faith?

Certain recent speeches by Attorney General Edwin Meese 3d are the most important, if not necessarily the most articulate, affirmations of a strain of protestantism that has always been part of the American constitutional debate. Some aspects of that strain are decidedly more attractive than those of its "catholic" counterpart. Our suspicions of the Attorney General's political motives should not lead us to dismiss as unworthy of serious reflection the constitutional perspective that he provides.

Before the Tulane University Citizens' Forum on the Bicentennial of the Constitution, Meese emphasized the "necessary distinction between the Constitution and constitutional law." He began by offering a classic protestant definition of the Constitution: it is a document that "begins 'We the People' and ends up, some 6,000 words later, with the Twenty-sixth Amendment." Constitutional law is simply "what the Supreme Court says about the Constitution in its decisions resolving the cases and controversies that come before it." The Attorney General went on to cite the historian Charles Warren, who has said, "It is still the Constitution which is the law, not the decisions of the Court."

This framework of understanding led to the most newsworthy aspect of his speech, a full-scale attack on the Court's role as, in its own words, "ultimate interpreter" of the Constitution. Although Meese was careful to concede the validity of a decision in regard to the particular parties before the Supreme Court, what stimulated controversy was his argument that only those parties are bound. "Such a decision does not establish a 'supreme Law of the Land' that is binding on all persons and parts of government, henceforth and forevermore." He noted that the Court itself does not regard its previous decisions as binding. He offered *Plessy v. Ferguson* as an example, which, he added, "finally and fortunately was struck down" by *Brown v. Board of Education*. What is good for the Court should be good throughout the polity. "Constitutional decisions need not be seen as the last words in constitutional construction"; instead, it is "the business of all branches of government" and, presumably, the citizenry at large, to participate in giving meaning to the text.

Beyond the identity of the speaker, what made Meese's remarks so volatile were his rhetoric and his examples. In attacking the Court's description of itself as ultimate interpreter of the Constitution, Meese also appeared to be attacking the case in which the Court delivered that pronouncement—*Cooper v. Aaron*, the Little Rock school desegregation case. And as a modern analogue to Abraham Lincoln's rejection of the general authority of the Court's decision in the Dred Scott case, he offered Daniel Manion's sponsorship, while a legislator, of a bill authorizing the posting of the Ten Commandments in the schools of Indiana, despite a 1980 Supreme Court decision invalidating a basically identical Kentucky statute. Meese describes Manion, now a member of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, as having "responded to a Supreme Court decision with which he disagreed."

Meese not only makes protestant speeches; he also takes protestant action. He has defended the Administration's refusal to enforce the obscure Competition in Contracting Act of 1984, stating that the law is unconstitutional by virtue of the role it assigned to the Comptroller General in choosing from among bids for government contracts. Some have argued that refusal to enforce the statute is a dereliction of the executive's duty to enforce the law, and that only the Court can declare unconstitutional a statute passed by Congress and signed by the President.

The Attorney General's statements provoked intense criticism. Eugene C. Thomas, the president of the American Bar Association, asserted that Supreme Court decisions are indeed the law of the land and that "public officials and private citizens are not free simply to disregard" their status as law. The implication of such disregard is to "shake the foundations of our system." Ira Glasser, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union, described Meese's speech as "an invitation to lawlessness" and "a call to defiance and to undermining the legitimacy of abiding by decisions that you disagree with." And Laurence Tribe, the Tyler professor of constitutional law at Harvard University, said Meese's position "represents a grave threat to the rule of law because it proposes a regime in which every lawmaker and every government agency becomes a law unto itself, and the civilizing hand of a uniform interpretation of the Constitution crumbles."

In *The New York Times*, Anthony Lewis accused the Attorney General of "making a calculated assault on the idea of law in this country: on the role of judges in the American

Sanford Levinson is a professor at the University of Texas Law School. Currently he is also a member of the Institute for Advanced Study, where he is completing a book titled Constitutional Faith.

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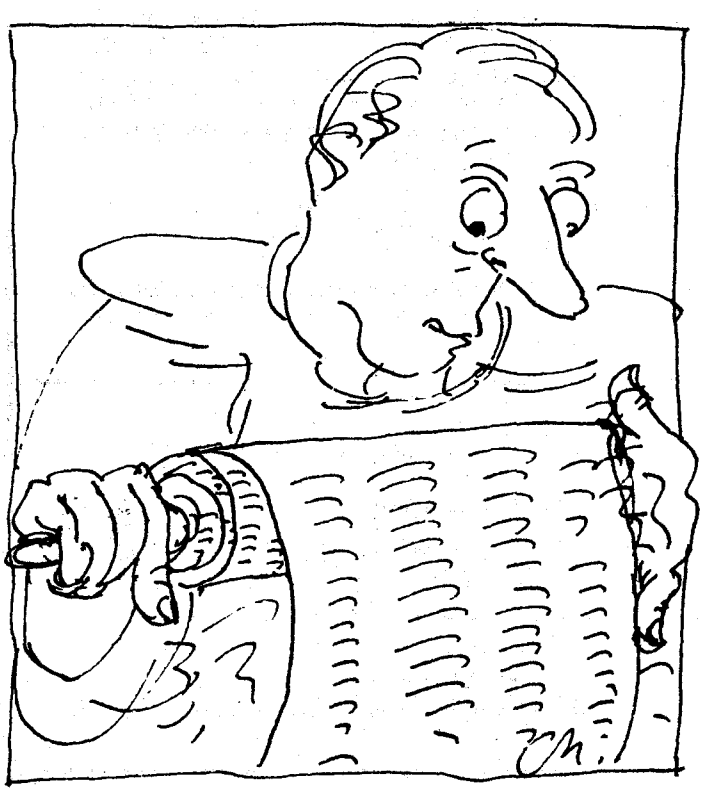
system." Lewis described Meese's position as "invit[ing] anarchy," and he quoted Benno Schmidt, who had left the deanship of the Columbia University Law School to become president of Yale University, denouncing Meese as "a man of power, not a man of law," who is taking the country on a "disastrous" course. The following Sunday *The Times* gave its most important Op-Ed space to an essay by Paul Brest, of the Stanford University Law School, headlined "Meese, the Lawman, Calls for Anarchy." The title did not do justice to Brest's point, which was about the present, though not inevitable, institutional inadequacies of Congress and the executive as thoughtful analysts of the Constitution.

Less critical commentators were also disquieted by the scope of Meese's speech. Gerald Gunther of the Stanford Law School agreed that the Supreme Court cannot "quiet a constitutional debate simply by issuing a particular ruling," but he warned that "the system would break down if every mayor, every state and local official insisted on being dragged into court" before recognizing that a Supreme Court decision was binding. Even Bruce Fein, a conservative constitutional theorist affiliated with the Heritage Foundation, said he wished the Attorney General had "qualified" his argument by conceding that "the rule of law" required that persons accept the authority of precedents that the Court itself has demonstrated no interest in reconsidering.

It is difficult to find a firm Archimedean point from which to lambaste Meese. As Lloyd Cutler, who was Jimmy Carter's White House counsel, noted, there was little in the speech with which Homer Cummings, F.D.R.'s Attorney General prior to the 1937 "revolution" in the Court, would have disagreed; and James Madison and Abraham Lincoln, both invoked by Meese, are scarcely figures outside the American mainstream.



The editorialists of *The Wall Street Journal*, writing in support of the Attorney General, no doubt enjoyed quoting from Professor Tribe's landmark 1979 treatise, *American Constitutional Law*:

> Despite the growth of federal judicial power, the Constitution remains a fundamentally democratic document, open to competing interpretations limited only by the values which inform the Constitution's provisions themselves, and by the complex political process that the Constitution creates—a process which on various occasions gives the Supreme Court, Congress, the President, or the states, the last word in constitutional debate.

It is hard to gainsay the proposition that the values embraced by the Constitution include federalism and protection of private property, however much liberals might justifiably highlight other values. Indeed, the problem with the Constitution, from the beginning, is that it has always been viewed as encompassing not only *many* values but even *competing* values—and visions of America.

The unsteadiness of the critics was exemplified by an editorial in *The Washington Post* titled "Why Give That Speech?" Having stated at the outset that Meese's overt argument—that the Supreme Court is not "immune from challenge"—is "self-evident," it focused on the "subtle, unspoken" message of his "very troublesome" remarks. *The Post* called on Meese to reject any implication that decisions of the Supreme Court have "no general applicability and that citizens may choose to ignore rulings at will." This, said *The Post*, would be "an invitation to constitutional chaos and an expression of contempt for the federal judiciary and the rule of law."

The problem with all such arguments is that there is a profound difference between the rule of law and submission to any particular institution's understanding of what the law requires, unless of course one adopts a catholic view of law, which identifies it with the utterances of a specific institution. A brief reference to Reformation history may be illuminating here. The Geneva Protestant Christopher Goodman emphasized in 1558 that God's law was "not geven onely to the Rulers and Governors," but was also "common to all the people, who are likewise bownde to the observation of the same." Thus, "if the Magistrates would whollye despice and betraye the justice and Lawes of God," the conscientious populace would have a duty to commit civil disobedience rather than acquiesce in the magistrates' misapplication of God's law. Goodman was not merely defending private conscience against the law; he was posing the question, Who gets to define what the law entails?

The critique of Protestantism has always included references to its potential for anarchy. Counter-Reformationists were absolutely correct in their view that rejection of the church's magisterium would lead to a multiplicity of interpretations and sects. But so what? The history of the West since the sixteenth century shows an increased ability to live

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in conditions of anarchy, whether defined as the dissolution of great empires or the ineluctable fragmentation of the great Western religions.

Perhaps, like Hobbes, the father of what might be termed authoritarian liberalism, we fear the additional anarchy that might come from rejecting the papal role of the Court. However, we might instead embrace what is truly positive about the strain of protestantism that Meese is invoking—the emphasis on the Constitution as a public source of social understanding, and the concomitant ability of all citizens to share in the debates about the meaning of our tenuously shared life.

There could be—indeed, will be—far worse ways to celebrate the Constitution's bicentennial than to engage in a serious public discussion about the judiciary's role as institutional interpreter and the political implications of accepting the Supreme Court as supreme over the polity in general. Sixty years ago Felix Frankfurter wrote that vigorous intervention in the political process by the Supreme Court was "mutilating the educative process" of democratic citizenship by teaching the citizenry that the Constitution was a fixed menu of answers to political conundrums that only the judiciary could read. I certainly do not endorse the extent of Frankfurter's animosity to judicial intervention, but he did have a genuine insight into the nature of the American polity.

It is ironic that those identified with the left are so quick to denounce Meese's speech, for that denunciation further legitimizes government by legally trained elites, speaking an ever-more esoteric language. It is of a piece with the left's lusty opposition to the prospect of a constitutional convention. James Madison's call in *The Federalist* for "veneration" of the Constitution has triumphed over Jefferson's plea for recurrent public consideration of its utility and potential defects. What is revealed, among other things, is a profound fear of the public in whose name the left pretends to speak. Rightists are rarely so encumbered: disdaining the mob, they forthrightly speak in the name of elite interests or values.

Just as a stopped clock is right twice a day, so Attorney General Meese can be a source of insight. In any event we should be aware that this latest protestant revival springs from deep within the culture of America. Its manifestations are all around us, even in the American Catholic Church, which is clearly on a path of increasing resistance to the claims of papal authority. I suspect that most readers of *The Nation* sympathize with Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen of Seattle in his desire to administer his diocese with at least some deviation from Catholic doctrine as enunciated by the Vatican. If *The Nation*'s readers do in fact believe that individuals should not be bound by the dictates of a rigidly hierarchical order in matters of religion, they might ask themselves why they should accept a similar structure within the American constitutional order. □

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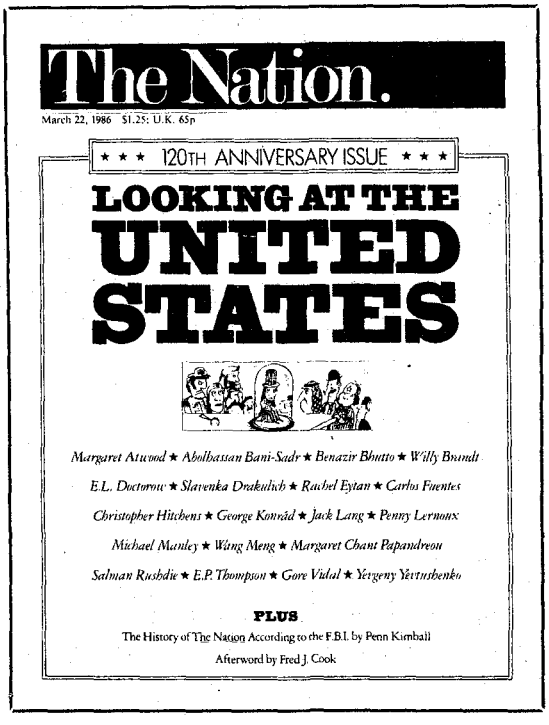
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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Imaginary Persons, Imaginary Prisons

EARL SHORRIS

Armando Fernando Valladares Pérez, the Cuban prison memoirist, has become the center of a controversy in which he plays no part. His life and history have been reduced to certainties, and he has suffered an ancient and perhaps honorable demise, death by abstraction.

I was one of his assassins.

To discover how I and others conspired against Armando Valladares and killed him, it is necessary to study the facts, many of which might seem, at first, unrelated to the case. To determine the meaning of his murder we must begin with what the victim said of himself.

In his memoir, *Against All Hope*, Valladares said he served twenty-two years in Cuban prisons because he opposed communism. During his imprisonment, he said, he was beaten, starved, subjected to the worst tortures ever used against human beings, finally paralyzed, and only saved from further suffering and perhaps death by becoming a poet whose works led various groups and individuals to press the Castro government for his release.

Although he was charged with terrorism, Valladares said no evidence was found to support the accusation. Near the time of his release, records were made public by the Cuban government showing that he was a member of Fulgencio Batista's political police. He claimed the reports were forged.

Everything about Valladares has been disputed, even his age and the color of his eyes; his very existence lingers between dubitable and dubious, giving credence to his story in a cockeyed Cartesian way.

The literary value of his poetry is not in doubt: there is none.

The literary value of his memoir is in doubt, and I claim the right as one who is related to the victim by murder to judge the value of his work: it is not beautiful, not entirely credible, not deeply affecting. The victim is neither a hero nor an artist; the victim is a victim.

The immediate cause of Valladares's death was an inflationary spiral of self-righteousness. He died slowly, becoming more and more abstract, until he disappeared from life. I was not alone in killing him. Here is a partial list of those who helped: Elliott Abrams, Alexander Cockburn, John Corry, Armando Hart Dávalos, Warren Hinckle 3d, Reed Irvine, Hilton Kramer, Mary McGrory, Aryeh Neier, Ronald Radosh, David Reiff, R. Emmett Tyrrell. We are the ancient alliance of enemies; we will not be satisfied until both Hector and Achilles are dead. As Homer explained:

> Each side has a mass
> of bitter words to say: no deepsea ship
> could take that load, even a hundred-
> bencher.
> Men have twisty tongues, and on them
> speech
> of all kinds; wide is the grazing land of
> words,
> both east and west. The manner of
> speech you use,
> the same you are apt to hear. By what
> necessity
> must we goad one another face to face
> with provocations? like two city
> women
> ruffling into the middle of a street
> to wrangle, bitten by rage,
> with many a true word—and some
> false, for anger
> calls out those as well.

And Helen is soon forgotten in her human life, abstracted, lost, paler than death. When Odysseus seeks to rally his men, Athena advises him to tell the men not to abandon the siege of Troy, because "The dead do not wish it."

The opportunity to watch a murder in progress was provided to the readers of the *New York Times* Op-Ed page recently by Elliott Abrams, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs:

> Mr. Castro has been shaken by the international attention given to Mr. Valladares. Yet other nations' policies toward Cuba have not altered: governments seldom change policy in reaction to belated disclosures of past abuses. But they're more likely to change policy in reaction to ongoing abuses. This is what Mr. Castro fears—disclosures that will affect not only what people think about his tyranny but also what other governments will do to express their revulsion.

The methods of the gods have not changed since the Greeks laid siege to Troy. Murder is a sin of omission. Abstract the victim, use him and move on. Abrams is fighting an old war in preparation for a new one. There is not much time. He does his work openly. He is not a philosopher, he is paid to kill; opinion is his opening barrage, like the thunder that precedes the battle.

There is also death by commission: in the course of a debate I heard a young neoconservative say, "Fascism was a brief phenomenon." I cannot help thinking, in retrospect, that it was the most vulgar sentence I had ever heard, the killing again of millions by common stupidity, an attack on the abstraction, as deeply, hideously anti-Semitic as Irving Kristol justifying the torture of Jacobo Timerman by Jew-hating Argentine neofascists or Norman Podhoretz publishing a defense of those same Argentine torturers and murderers.

Should we despair of the history of events? Is there any history but the history of ideas? Armando Valladares wrote the history of his years in prison, and we have no reason to doubt what he said, according to Abrams, Corry, McGrory, Irvine, Radosh, Reiff and Tyrrell, and every reason to doubt it, according to Cockburn, Hart and Hinckle. They all speak as if to prove Marx's view of ideology, which may be brutalized as Where you sit is where you stand.

If class is the beginning of ideology, it is surely not the end. For Talcott Parsons, ideology is a sort of wishing, reality made to conform to a preferred concept. For Georges Sorel, ideologies are directed by myths. Myths need not be born of reality in Sorel's view because it is not reality that interests him, but action, which he believes is inspired by myth. The controversy over the Valladares memoir would seem to prove Sorel's theory.

Myths also inspire stability, as Durkheim explained; they are the commonly held beliefs of the members of a society. If that is the case, the battle between ideologies is the battle to make or destroy myths, which Homer knew—Hector had his gods and Achilles his.

Earl Shorris is the author of Scenes from Corporate Life *(Penguin) and* Jews Without Money *(Anchor).*

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For the left, Cuba is the stuff of which myths are made: Batista overthrown, Che's New Man created. Cuba is the human face of successful revolution; that is the myth that gives stability and coherence to the society of the left.

For the right, Valladares is Sorel's myth of the clean sweep—he provides a way of understanding Cuba as a vast prison; he becomes an inspiration to the kind of certainty that results in action. For the right, Valladares is not a man, but a weapon to be used against the bastion of communism in the West. The left, meanwhile, with a myth to believe in, defends that myth as if it were the soul of social justice in our time.

Both the attacking right and the defending left have enormous problems to overcome. Cuba is not paradise. Nor is it hell. The left wishes away the terrible conditions of Cuban prisons, the great number of political prisoners. The right will not admit the rise in literacy or the decline in infant mortality or even the dancing of Alicia Alonso. Both sides must speak the heightened language of ideology to overcome the gravity of the truth.

A clue, perhaps a proof, of the role of myth in the dispute over Valladares may be found in the choice of words in one of the arguments. Ronald Radosh, in *The New York Times Book Review*, wrote: "Until the publication of this book . . . we had not had a full picture of the brutality meted out to real and imaginary opponents by the Castro dictatorship." And then, "they were thrown into punishment cells, including the dreaded 'drawer cells,' specially constructed units that make South Vietnam's infamous tiger cages seem like homey quarters."

When a writer speaks of brutality toward imaginary opponents he is speaking of imaginary brutality, of nightmare but not of reality, which is a way of making the world conform to the myths of his ideology. Similarly the writer may invent impossible conjunctions of realities to remake the world in accordance with his myth, as in the argument about "drawer cells," "tiger cages" and "homey quarters." There is, of course, no way that Radosh can know about drawer cells and tiger cages and compare them with homey quarters. Alexander Cockburn, who holds a very different ideology, uses the same tactic by joining Armando Valladares's book to Ronald Radosh's betrayal of his uncle, in his reply to a letter from Radosh in

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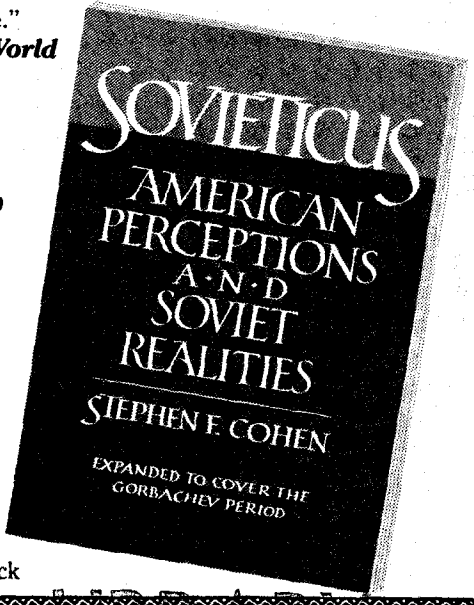

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The Nation [see "Letters," Sept. 20]:

> I think Ronald Radosh was "moved" by Armando Valladares's book largely because it allowed him to get paid by *The New York Times* for dashing off another anti-Castro diatribe. Radosh is a professional anticommunist, with the tunnel vision that goes with that trade. There are plenty of accounts, far more convincing than the ill-written jumble that constitutes Valladares's "recollections," of Palestinians rotting and tortured in Israel's jails, but I haven't noticed Radosh being "moved" by their accounts, or taking the risky course of challenging the U.S. propaganda machine on Israel. Radosh's idea of taking a courageous intellectual stance is to submit to *The Washington Post* an article saying his uncle wasted his life defending the Spanish Republic during the Civil War.

Since myths are invented, one would expect them to be as orderly as art or arithmetic, but that has not been the case, at least since Homer. The old gods and the young gods accuse each other of hubris and commonness even though they may be allies. And often the small wars within one camp of mythmakers are the cruelest. David Reiff, who is the son of Susan Sontag, used the Valladares memoir to attack the myth of a coherent left while creating a new myth of intellectual or erotic anticommunism around the sorrowful and imposing figure of his mother. Of the old gods of his camp he says (*The New Republic,* July 28), a "decent feeling of mourning for a great human hope is what is missing from neo-conservatism; though its anti-communism is correct, its way with ideas is coarse and vulgar when compared with the tradition it criticizes."

Then one of the old gods, Hilton Kramer, editor of *The New Criterion,* appears in the form of a scorpion to punish the young one for his hubris. His method is to visit the sins of the mother upon the son and then to stand back and be amused at the son's predicament. It is a nasty business between Kramer and Sontag and son, "like two city women ruffling into the middle of a street to wrangle."

Kramer says in the September *New Criterion,* "neoconservatism . . . emerged from the turmoil of the Sixties to defend American democracy against the atrocious ideas of people like Susan Sontag," which makes it different from the Sontag circle's anticommunism; Reiff argues that his form of anticommunism emerged from the turmoil of the 1960s to defend the human race against the atrocious ideas of people like Fidel Castro. Kramer informs his readers early on that David Reiff is merely using the Valladares memoir, but it does not occur to him to say anything about his use of the man's life. For a man to be reduced to a means apparently carries no weight for Kramer or Reiff. Or for Cockburn or Hart. And it is merely noted here.

This business of opinion was of such importance to Simone Weil that she said,

> Publications destined to influence what is called opinion, that is to say, in effect, the conduct of life, constitute acts and ought to be subjected to the same restrictions as are all acts. In other words, they should not cause unlawful harm of any kind to any human being, and above all, should never contain any denial, explicit or implicit, of the eternal obligations toward the human being, once those obligations have been solemnly recognized by law.

Weil worked in factories to learn the worker's life and later starved herself to death because she could not bear to eat while others went hungry, but she was not a fool; she had witnessed the rise of fascism, she knew the power of opinion. "The need of freedom itself," she wrote, "so essential to the intellect, calls for a corresponding protection against suggestion, propaganda, influence by means of obsession."

Her fear was of the power of ideology. She was a romantic who loved reason. In contrast to Sorel, who believed in the power of the unconscious, the *élan vital,* the myth that gives life to social movements, Simone Weil was rooted in the reality of sweat and hunger, she began with truth; and even if one disagrees with the meaning she found in religion, there can be no doubt about her motives.

Her answer to the effect of ideology on journalism is commonplace: tell the truth. But of course everyone knows that journalists always tell the truth, that every opinion is an honest opinion. What is said as fact is fact in the mind of the speaker. If Jorge Valls, author of *Twenty Years & Forty Days: Life in a Cuban Prison,* in his cool, credible description of the years in which he and Armando Valladares were in the same prisons, gives an account of the punishments and deprivations political prisoners endured, and Valladares's version is so heightened that it must be considered a work of a different kind, there is no

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reason to suspect that either man is lying, despite our firm belief in a single objective reality.

How different is the step from Valls to Valladares, from the distinction between raw truth and the imposition of editorial sensibilities required to arrive at "All the News That's Fit to Print"?

There are two dimensions of truth, according to Roy Medvedev: necessary truth and truth that is not necessary; the larger truth and the smaller truth; truth of the isolated fact and truth of the age as a whole; truth of the individual event and truth of the overall phenomenon; apparent truth and real truth. This notion of two dimensions of truth, or double truth has antecedents in the thirteenth-century Roman Catholic Church, which held that an idea could be both true and false: logically or philosophically true and theologically false.

On a scale at which the differences between the larger truth and the smaller truth become obvious, the outrages of Stalinism may be described as the smaller truth, while the scientific and economic progress of the Soviet Union since 1917 may be described as the larger truth; the pleasures of democracy may be described as the larger truth of the United States, while the miseries of racism and poverty may be described as the smaller truth.

In *Changing the Rules of the Game*, Armando Hart Dávalos, Cuban Minister of Culture, argues that Cuba's enemies (the information transnationals) want to concentrate on the smaller truth. "Are issues in the arts to be judged by scandals about fabricated 'cases,' or the number of exhibits and houses of culture in the country?" he asks. And concludes, "Our greatest 'scandal' is the Revolution itself." One of the smaller truths or "cases" to which he refers is that of Armando Valladares; Minister Hart is the most forthcoming of those who conspired to kill him.

The turn of mind of those who live by the larger or smaller truths fits the story of the hedgehog and the fox in Isaiah Berlin's essay on Tolstoy. He quotes the Greek poet Archilochus: "The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing." And he gives the reader two lists of examples. The foxes: Shakespeare, Herodotus, Aristotle, Montaigne, Erasmus, Molière, Goethe, Pushkin, Balzac and Joyce. The hedgehogs: Dante, Plato, Lucretius, Pascal, Hegel, Dostoyevsky, Nietzsche, Ibsen and Proust. It is an oversimplification, as Berlin warns his readers, but it begins to explain who would murder Valladares and who would permit him to live.

In the opinion business, which is neither journalism nor art nor philosophy, but the larval form of the essay, the difference between the larger truths of the hedgehogs and the smaller truths of the foxes is based in the order of the process: whether meaning is contingent on truth or truth is contingent on meaning. If the writer lives in a world defined by the myths of ideology, the order of thought is clear and comforting: ideology is meaning, therefore truth must conform to ideology. Whatever is outside the ideological construct is contrary to reality, a lie. Armando Valladares was one of Batista's monsters or Alicia Alonso does not exist. There is paradise or hell, but there is no Cuba. And the hedgehogs have killed Valladares.

If the writer makes meaning contingent on truth, he must deal with the living, the creature that is as intransigent as his own navel, the one that stinks, the one that implies and is implied, the one that bumbles and bleeds as it goes along

Next year we mark the 200th anniversary of the Constitution and its Bill of Rights. It is not a dead letter today largely because of those indiviuals who persisted in pursuing their protected rights in the face of persecution for advancing unpopular causes. In *The Great Fear*, David Caute speaks of "scholars and writers who suffered in their careers as a result of the China witch-hunt—including notably Lawrence Rosinger, Bisson and William Marx Mandel . . ."

Mandel electrified the national audience of the televised Joe McCarthy proceedings: "This is a bookburning! You lack only the tinder to set fire to the books as Hitler did 20 years ago, and I am going to get that across to the American people!"

When HUAC had at him in 1960, Mandel set the tone for the students of that decade with these words: "If you think I will cooperate with this collection of Judases, of men who sit there in violation of the United States Constitution, you are insane!"

Blacklisted form publishing for 17 years, with the defeat of McCarthyism, to which he contributed, Mandel returned to his scholarship on the Soviet Union.

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between life and death, stupid and weary, but graced by a love of freedom and a tolerance for caprice. This writer lives with smaller truths, like the great fox Montaigne, enduring a life so unpredictable and yet so rich he will be reduced to stating his motto in the form of a question, a surrender to the wonder of existence, such as, "What do I know?"

The insecurity of the life of the fox is unendurable, as any good salesman knows. Read the advertisements for banks or brokerage firms; investors prefer security to profit. Or listen to the Rev. Jerry Falwell, who promises his television audience the "eternal security of the believer." The fox will suffer anxiety, but the fox will never suffer what Isaiah Berlin calls "the despotism of fanatical theorists"; the fox will never be a slave.

When the writer of opinion accepts despotic rule over the order of his reason, it results in the kind of work produced for *The New York Times* by John Corry in his review of *Cuba: In the Shadow of Doubt*, a documentary shown October 2 on PBS. Corry begins his review with the ideologue's ironic self-righteousness: "Let's hear it now for the Cuban revolution, a fine adventure gone slightly astray, although not through any fault of Fidel Castro." He goes on to say that the program is not balanced, that even though it shows "friends and foes of Mr. Castro . . . this is window dressing. The one-hour documentary sells a myth." To argue with a current film of a women's prison in Cuba, he cites the Valladares memoir. Then he writes, "The peek inside the women's prison, of course, makes it harder to believe reports like that. Indeed, the documentary . . . doesn't want us to think badly of Cuba at all."

To think badly is to make truth contingent on meaning, to think inside the construct of an ideology. Only then can one accept the kind of myth that Corry sees in other men's opinions, but not in his own.

Taking Corry's conclusion that the PBS program was "calculated propaganda" as its starting point, Reed Irvine's "Accuracy in Media Report" stated, "The propaganda is for Fidel Castro and his revolution, which has impoverished, enslaved, and exiled millions of the once happy people of Cuba." Of course, Irvine's statement is foolish; Jorge Valls declared that in 1958 he thought that Cuba under Batista was "in danger of becoming a totalitarian state, as fanatical as Hitler's Germany." But the Irvine statement is a good example of the larger truth. Proof of the larger truth for Accuracy in Media is the Valladares memoir: "No one with any integrity could have read Valladares and then approved airing a film containing monstrous lies about things that Valladares had exposed in his book." The victim, who was a man, has become a myth; he is no longer an arguable creature, as uncertain as the next moment of your life or mine; he defines the world, his word is incontrovertible; according to Ronald Radosh, he brings suit against those who doubt him.

Warren Hinckle 3d, now a Hearst columnist, has taken the side of the old myth. He has journeyed to Cuba, where he "took the trouble to check out Valladares's background," and found that "Valladares was no 'poet' but was rather a member of the hated Batista police who killed and tortured at will, and a protégé of Armando Carratala, the most bloodthirsty of Batista's professional torturers."

A man who had recently emigrated from Rumania told me that he preferred the Nazis to the Russians. Communism, he said, bothered everyone all the time in little ways, while the Nazis were easy to get along with, unless you were a Jew. The happy people of Cuba under Batista, the happy gentiles of Rumania under Hitler: the political myth makes sense only to those who make truth contingent on meaning. It is not myth used

UNCERTAINTY AT THE NATION

Mr. Cockburn has demonstrated his taste for Communist apologetics by attacking reviewers who were impressed by Valladares and his book, and by defending the Castro regime against charges that it has tried to smear Valladares by forging evidence that he worked for the police under the Batista government. Valladares himself exposes the forgery very effectively in his book. Earl Shorris, who reviewed *Against All Hope* for The Nation, the left-wing magazine that publishes Cockburn's column, came away convinced that the Cubans were smearing Valladares with forgeries after checking with officials of their U.N. Mission. —*AIM REPORT October-B, 1986*

EVIDENCE, NOT CERTAINTY

Everywhere in the world, the issue of political repression is almost always brought to public notice by the denunciations of victims or by reports written by organizations dedicated to the defense of human rights. Whether emotional or well balanced, these testimonies help reveal a hidden history. But at times they are accused of tendentiousness because they come from victims who are often politically motivated.

The "Brazil: Never Again" (BNM) research project was able to resolve this problem by studying the repression carried out by the military regime through the very documents produced by the authorities performing the controversial task. This was done by bringing together the official legal proceedings of practically all political cases tried in Brazilian military courts between April 1964 and March 1979, especially those that reached the Supreme Military Court.

Why were official military court proceedings chosen as the basic documentary source? . . . We thought that if in Brazil we could reconstruct the history of torture, murders of political prisoners, police persecutions, and biased trials—using the government's own official documentation—then we would have irrefutable evidence that these practices were officially authorized.

—*Torture in Brazil* (Introduction to the Brazilian edition)

THE MEDIUM IS THE MESSAGE

William Friedkin, who directed "The French Connection" and "To Live and Die in L.A.," has just purchased Armando Valladares's recent book "Against All Hope," an account of the author's 22 years in a Cuban prison. Mr. Friedkin paid "a healthy six figures" for the book, according to Thomas Colchie, Mr. Valladares's literary agent. —*The New York Times* November 8, 1986

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to explain reality, as in literature since Aeschylus; it is myth used in place of reality.

In recent years, abuses of human rights have become an important resource for mythmakers. The concept of human rights in use in the West is essentially a bourgeois notion, for it is legalistic at its core. Human rights as they are understood in the rest of the world concern more elemental conditions of existence—food, shelter, clothing, literacy. Thus, when an American questions a Russian about the gulag, the Russian replies with a question about the homeless. The issue is not which category of human rights is more important. We must, as Aryeh Neier of Americas Watch says, have both. The issue is why so many writers choose to place themselves inside a construct that makes them blind to one category or the other, why writers cannot agree with Neier that Armando Valladares is probably not the most reliable witness of Cuba's violations of the human rights of many of its citizens.

In fact, there is no true dialectic of myth, for there can be no synthesis except in the minds of those who live outside the construct of an ideology, the lonely ones who live impossibly in Bertrand Russell's set of those who do not belong to any set. In their loneliness is the beginning of understanding of the allure of ideology.

The ideological writers are not like the examples drawn by Czeslaw Milosz, victims of the incomprehensible duplicity called *ketman*, sufferers like Tadeusz Borowski, the novelist who wandered from concentration camp to communism to suicide. No such monstrous experiences attend life as a newspaper columnist in San Francisco or a member of a propaganda tank in Washington; these writers have chosen to live under "the despotism of fanatical theorists" for other reasons.

The writing of ideologues is driven by sentimentality, not the mawkish insincerity that Frank Sinatra sings, but thought controlled by emotion, growing out of emotion. At first, it seems unlikely that a book review or a television critic's columns would proceed from emotion, but these are not reviews, they are expressions of belonging, of safety, family, home; they are the work of the warriors of myth, who suffer terrible anxiety over the health of the myth which provides them with the stability of home. So it is sentimentality of the most sincere kind, heartfelt emotion; for the ideologue, the one who cannot bear the thought of the lonely and capricious life of the person who makes meaning contingent on truth, every article, every review, every sentence is an auto-da-fé.

The stabilized world of ideology permits no deviation from certainty. In one of the thoughts comprising his little book *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein said, "Where two principles really do meet which cannot be reconciled with one another, then each man declares the other a fool and a heretic." Once a person enters the world of certainty, the task changes from thinking to action. With meaning already known, the fools and heretics gather over the corpses to engage in the conflict of myths. As Wittgenstein said, "At the end of reasons comes *persuasion*." There is no work left for those writers but the work of publicists: a small controversy arises over something that was once a man, Armando Valladares, because war has begun in Nicaragua.

To conduct a war, certainty is necessary; the role of the publicists is to infect the rest of the population with

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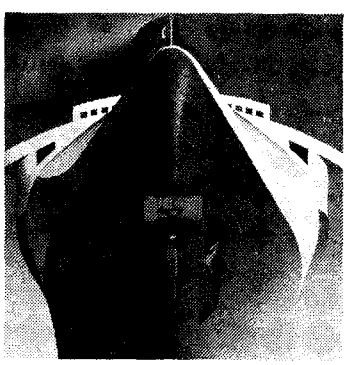

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their certainty about Castro, Cuba and, by inference, Nicaragua. The strategy on the right is to take the human rights values of the Carter Administration and turn them against all leftist movements in the Americas. It is a wily strategy, and Fidel Castro's policies on political dissent deliver exactly what it needs; in the clash of myths, synecdoche is an ideal maneuver.

Out of certainty comes self-righteousness, which makes one both vigorous and vulnerable. Any question is an attack which must be met with a more ferocious counterattack. Inflation results; publicity accompanies its words with action. The ultimate act of the ideological publicist, the certain person's perfect expression is the famous act of personal war—terrorism.

Listen to Ch'en, the Chinese terrorist in Malraux's *Man's Fate*: "If it's a question of killing Chiang Kai-shek, I know. As for this fellow Vologin, it's all the same to him I guess; but for him, instead of murder, it's obedience. For people who live as we do there must be a certainty. For him, carrying out orders is sure, I suppose, as killing is for me. Something *must* be sure. Must be."

Opinion, then, must be judged in the manner demanded by Simone Weil; opinion is an act and is intended as an act; as the myth of the right succeeds, the abstraction and use of Armando Valladares leads to murder by the Central Intelligence Agency in Nicaragua. Ideology is terrorism, the route is clear; those who are certain are as dangerous as Plato wished to be. If that is so, then the moral goal of the political writer must be to cause uncertainty, to stand beside Ch'en as he raises a dagger over the body of his sleeping victim and whisper, "What do I know?" □

PARENTS DAY, 1950

How can I have forgotten it, how I
breathed shallow as I looked for her in the
crowd of oncoming parents. I can even
clearly remember being flat-chested, how the
hard embroidered board of my chest would press
forward and I'd race toward her. I remember her
bigger than I, soft, her smile
wide and not quite beautiful but
absolutely sparkling with
consciousness of prettiness—how I
pitied the other girls for those mothers who
looked their age, who did not have bright
shining polished teeth.
Sometimes she even had braids around her head like a
goddess or an advertisement for California raisins—
ardent for her I was, leaning forward and
straining at the leash like a dog. My life was
rich with preference for what I had,
her cleanliness, her bright eyes,
and I felt her scrutiny, I could feel her
sensing her genes dotted here and there in my body like
undissolved sugar in a cake.
For so long all I could think of was the
long darkening of her happiness, the
years when the sweet became sour and the sour so
sour it must be evil—but now I
remember the way it felt for my heart to
bang and my lungs swell so I could feel the
tucks and puckers of the smocking on my chest press
into my ribs and the calm insensitive
pools of my nipples, my whole washboard
front tilt and sing like corrugated
silver in the sun to see that woman coming and
know she was mine.

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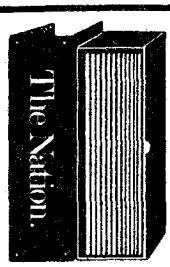

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All the Comforts

BRINA CAPLAN

HOME: A Short History of an Idea. *By Witold Rybczynski. Viking. 256 pp. $16.95.*

Sitting in one of Marcel Breuer's Wassily chairs, says Canadian architect Witold Rybczynski, is like entrusting your bones to an exercise machine. As for Mies van der Rohe's chairs or the Eames's famous leather lounger, if your garments are too smooth or your gestures too bold, watch out: you're likely to shoot from your lodgment like a smacked croquet ball. "What does the twentieth-century chair offer us?" he asks. His answer is that if "the Rococo chair invites conversation, and the Victorian chair invites after-dinner naps . . . the Modern chair is all business. 'Let's get this sitting over with and get back to something useful,' it commands. It is about many things, this chair, but it is no longer about ease, leisure, or, if truth be told, about comfort."

We assume comfort ought to be a priority when designers put together furnishings or plan the layout for a home. But we make that assumption from a privileged place in history, according to Rybczynski, who notes that the very word "comfort" did not have its present meaning in the Middle Ages. Medieval life lacked privacy, intimacy and ease—components of domestic comfort that Rybczynski says evolved slowly in Western Europe, in tandem with bourgeois culture. Madame de Pompadour, "that great bourgeoise," was responsible for decreasing the scale of the then mammoth furniture at Versailles by encouraging the court's interest in "the small, the precious, and the intimate." The seventeenth-century Dutch, who invented window curtains and the double-hung, openable window, also invented—or at the very least developed—the idea of the family home. Their domestic arrangements were child-oriented and centered on well-scrubbed, well-arranged kitchens. The scrubbers and arrangers, of course, were women. One of Rybczynski's points is that women have a traditional understanding of domestic comfort that is ignored by the male-dominated world of design. It is only in the past hundred years that women have begun to be heard as interior designers, advisers and "domestic engineers."

Rybczynski considers the first decades of this century, when home design allowed residents "commodity and delight" and electricity allowed women to run efficient, servantless households, as a high point in comfort. As a historical survey, *Home* traces the technological and psychological changes that produced our modern sense of domestic ease. But while Rybczynski is explaining how we achieved comfort, he is also arguing that we are well on the way to losing it. He has a case to make against "the fundamental poverty of modern architectural ideas."

Comfort lost out in the 1930s, he argues, when avant-garde designers like Le Corbusier and van der Rohe equated minimalism with political purity. The Albert Speer school of architecture, you'll recall, was pseudo-Roman on a grand scale: lots of Aryan cherubim and twining acanthus leaves. In reaction, our side adopted Bauhaus bleak. However well-meant the move, it was wrong-headed, Rybczynski believes. The beneficiaries of the style were the postwar entrepreneurs who got rich turning out stripped-down, standardized products en masse. For the average person the result has been a work environment that seems "another unpleasant but inevitable by-product of modern life, like traffic jams or plastic forks." Worse, minimalism has destroyed some of the capacity of the home to console us or to suggest other ways of living: our bathrooms tend to look like aseptic surgeries rather than places to enjoy a long, gentle soak, and bedrooms are planned as stark white cubes that offer no relief to the weary spirit or tired eye.

Home advocates coziness and convenience over a finished appearance or elegance of line. "Hominess is not neatness," Rybczynski insists. "Otherwise everyone would live in replicas of the kinds of sterile and impersonal homes that appear in interior-design and architectural magazines. What [has been] removed, is any evidence of human occupation. . . . These pristine interiors fascinate and repel me. Can people really live without clutter? How do they stop the Sunday papers from spreading over the living room? How

Brina Caplan writes about literature and psychology.

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do they manage without toothpaste tubes and half-used soap bars in their bathrooms?"

Because Rybczynski cares about how the clothes or the kids get washed and expects goo to accumulate in the bathroom soap dish, his book avoids the elitism implicit in arguments over high-style decor. He's not some cranky sentimentalist. In fact, he shows an anthropologist's curiosity about the current wave of decor nostalgia that designer Ralph Lauren has been riding.

With sepia photos of Brideshead-style interiors and suggestions of Newport and Gatsby, Lauren exploits a fantasy of life as it was. Yet few of us, says Rybczynski, actually want to don tweed and live Sebastian Flyte's life of horsy leisure. Instead, we want to enjoy the benefits of contemporary technology without sacrificing older, hard-won comforts such as privacy and intimacy. And it's only because these design values are not generally available that they've become Lauren's commercial property.

Rybczynski wants to blame the avant-garde architects of the 30s for just about everything that's gone wrong with home design. Likely, that's unfair. Even so, he is right to remind us of a longing for comfort that often, today, is in competition with a harsher aesthetic. The past generated private values that still matter. Most of us need a home environment which respects our frailty, which accommodates psyche and flesh—which, in effect, offers us a good chair to sit in. □

LETTERS.

(*Continued From Page 690*)

very mediocre Western reader, who does not want to inquire too much about how the Nazi phenomenon is linked with Western culture and who wants somebody to calm him down by describing what happened as an outbreak of the forces of evil without shaking too much the fundamental picture of the good bourgeois humanist West—somebody who will serve up the most terrible thing, which cannot be ignored, in a wrapping of humanistic phrases.

. . .

Except for giving a few saccharine sweet talks about everything and nothing, Elie Wiesel will never apply any of the lessons of the Holocaust to public political involvement, except in the easy condemnation of delays in immigration from the Soviet Union. That is also why the conservative establishment in the United States could place him in the center of the stage of honorations and the media, and make him very wealthy, which would not have happened if he was a little more controversial.

Let us say, therefore, clearly: Wiesel cannot be regarded as a real writer, but neither can he be regarded as a real thinker or a real social fighter.

If the Nobel Committee had wanted to single out a concentration camp survivor for the Peace Prize, it would have done far better to have honored Professor Israel Shahak of Hebrew University, chair of the Israeli League for Human Rights, whose struggles for justice in Israel and the Occupied Territories, wrought often in loneliness and amid public obloquy, have truly formed a magnificent crusade for peace.

Alexander Cockburn

HOME ALONE

Duluth, Minn.

Eileen Boris lays out an excellent variety of reasons that the working class, and particularly working-class women, should continue their historical opposition to commercial work in the home ["A Woman's Place?" Oct. 18]. I wonder, however, if she did not miss the biggest drawback of all: home work isolates the laborers, preventing mutual support and thus making them dependent on management for their consciousness as well as their terms of labor. Surely the image of alienated, competitive, "pin money" laborers is the ideological wellspring of the homework movement.

Steve Chilton

DISCERNING DANTO

Santa Cruz, Calif.

Many thanks and three cheers for Arthur C. Danto's review of David Sawin's exhibit ["Art," Oct. 18]. As a visual artist, I think it was worth a whole year's subscription to read such a discerning evaluation of the contemporary art world. I am sorry not to be in New York to see the Sawin exhibition at the Waverly. Is there any chance one of the slick art magazines will have color reproductions? Not if Danto's argument holds.

Kathryn Metz

The Nation welcomes letters—typed, double spaced and no longer than 300 words, please. Letters may be edited for reasons of space.

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ANNOUNCING
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SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 2129

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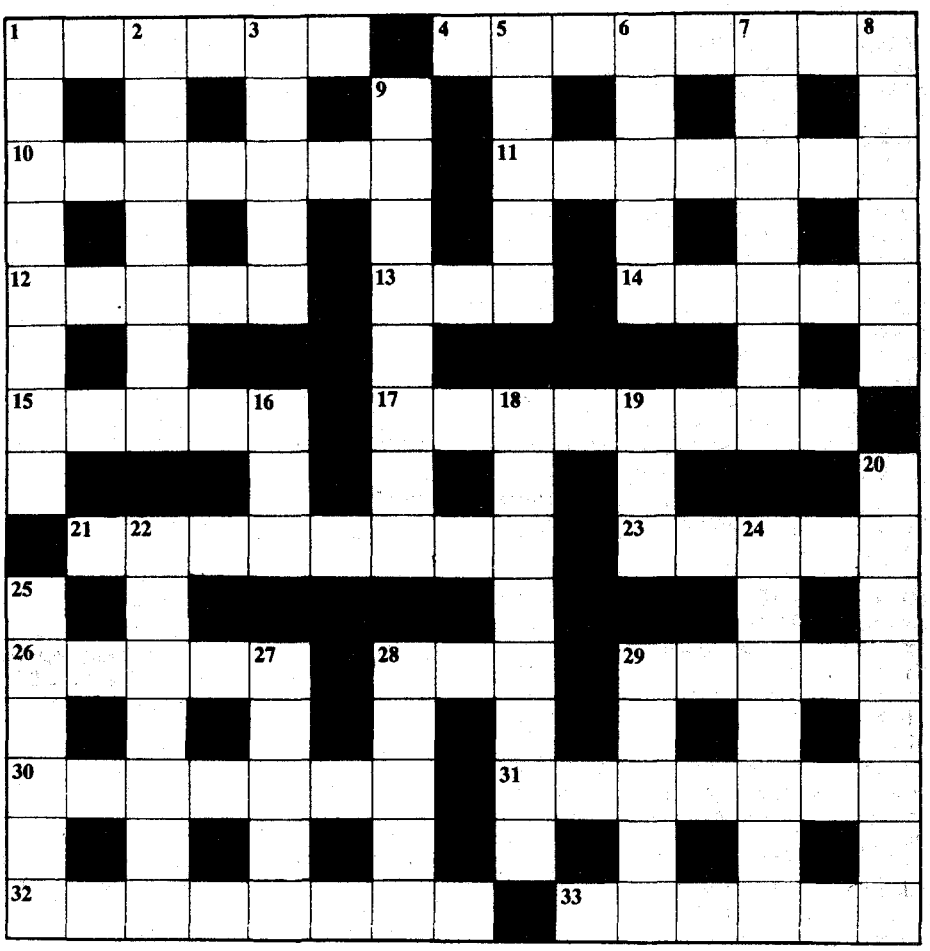

ACROSS

1 Sort of cold—i.e., easy to handle. (6)
4 A serving of partly ground husks—presented with flourish. (8)
10 How to make a sort of lamb say the unfathomable. (7)
11 Bloom in novel form of this, but employs a sly maneuver internally. (7)
12 See 5 down
13 Used to make a bow perhaps—as a symbol for great remorse. (3)
14 See 28 across
15 Be about to cry, in a way, because of the canyon? (5)
17 How the unsuspecting might be taken—but the way to run a war especially brings it out. (8)
21 A word of warning of course to reckon with, as I might prophesy. (8)
23 Some game runs fast, obviously. (5)
26 and 24 down You might ask for it in case there's a sale later. It's made out of the real stuff, Sir! (5,7)
28 and 14 With this space, I'll cultivate a berry tree! (8)
29 Steal a weapon? It's groovy! (5)
30 In Paris, it's good to be in the home, as Jock might say, and have something for the soup. (7)
31 Goddess associated with the evening? It makes sin seem wrong! (7)
32 A number associated with drinking holes? (8)
33 Registered votes after the horns had been taken away? (6)

DOWN

1 Help is coming up, with the group of people making a sharp attack. (8)
2 Willie the Weeper when young? (7)
3 It's a sort of plum on your beginning. Good gravy, it shouldn't be! (5)
5, 19 and 12 across President Taylor was supposedly so unpolished, but available. (5,3,5)
6 Poet? Well, not exactly—but then again, affirmatively so! (5)
7 Take a deep breath—with regard to something, pi's pied in it! (7)
8 Hurry out of Athens—there's an outbreak of it! (6)
9 Unpolluted meadows inside it—what fun! (8)
16 One for one—that's retribution for you! (3)
18 Everything? Almost everything—and a single person, unaccompanied. (3,5)
19 See 5
20 Pressed a change, and was thereupon slandered. (8)
22 One might be expected to get in a row, but that's a Roman's fault. (7)
24 See 26 across
25 Two articles separated by the span between E and I—such as a blanket for the dog. (6)
27 It might be a catch—by Schubert. (5)
28 Fred's partner has one to take out. (5)
29 A lover of the city? There's nothing to it! (5)

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There is no anesthetic in Villa Nueva.

©ANDREW RITCHIE

The *contra* war and economic blockade have crippled health care in Nicaragua. Acute shortages of the most basic medicines create scenes like this one in Villa Nueva:

A six-day-old baby with an infected umbilical cord. No antibiotics to treat infection. No anesthetic to stop pain.

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With your help, vital vaccines, anesthetics, drugs and surgical supplies will arrive in Nicaragua in as little as six weeks. To ensure that our shipping containers are filled to capacity, however, we must receive your check within the next 30 days.

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